Masters of English Literature Series

THOMAS HARDY

WITH

★ FAR FROM THE MEDDING CROWD;

★ THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE;

★ THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE, AND

★ TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES

by

H. NEWMAN M.A.

Rs. [redacted]

NOORSONS

LAHORE — PESHAWAR

17 Urdu Bazar Qissa Khani

Masters of English Literature Series

THOMAS HARDY

WITH

★ FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD;
★ THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE;
★ THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE, AND
★ TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES

by

H. NEWMAN, M.A.

Rs. [redacted]

NOORSONS
LAHORE — PESHAWAR
17 Urdu Bazar / Qissa Khani

Published by
NOORSONS
Urdu Bazar, Lahore.

★
Printed at
ZARREEN ART PRESS
61, Railway Road, Lahore.
Phone: 66274

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

LIFE AND WORKS

Birth and Parentage : Thomas Hardy was one of those children who are born with little hope of survival but rise to great fame and receive universal applause. He was born on June 2, 1840 at Upper Bockhampton near Dorchester. His father was a prosperous master mason but his social status was not high. When he was born, he was so frail that he was pronounced dead but because of a vigorous slapping from the nurse he was brought to life and lived almost upto the age of ninety.

Hardy's father was very fond of music. He was a famous violinist and singer and was invited to participate in various social functions. But he was very unambitious and never thought of leaving his village. His mother was an ambitious, sympathetic and encouraging woman. She was very fond of reading. Thus from his father he inherited the love of music and countryside and from his mother he got his fondness for reading. He learnt to fiddle while he was very young and participated in many village festivities.

His Education : At the age of nine Hardy was sent to the village school which was at a distance of three miles. He passed through a beautiful valley and came in contact with nature. Then he entered the High school at Dorchester. He was a lonely and thoughtful boy and enjoyed taking the daily walk from his home to the school alone. He grew familiar with his native surroundings. He was very intelligent and promising as a student. He had a great capacity of learning. He graduated at the age of sixteen but his health began to fail and he had to discontinue his studies. His father put him under his friend John Hicks who was a famous architect of Dorchester. Hicks trained Hardy well. During his spare time he went to William Barnes—a poet who kept a school, for his intellectual problems and arguments. Thus

he combined the professional life with that of a scholar. He also came into contact with other famous literary men. Horace Moule taught him to read Greek. He guided Hardy's reading and sympathised with his ambition of becoming an author. But Moule had to undergo a great suffering which surely left a deep mark on Hardy. He must have also not forgotten the boy labourer who died from starvation and was found under a hedge and the woman who was publicly hanged at Dorchester. These and the ravages of cholera which he saw in his early life moulded his mental outlook.

His stay at London : When he was twenty two his training in Dorchester was complete and he proceeded to London to fulfil both his architectural and literary ambitions. He joined the staff of a famous young achitect, Sir Arthur Blomfield who was a man of great kindness and insight and was also a good musician. In his spare time he continued to advance his literary ambition. He read widely, attended lectures and went to concerts and picture-galleries. He was much impressed by Huxley and Mill. He attempted an essay on architecture which brought him a prize. He aimed at authorship and desired to become a poet. He gave up all work for sometime and read poetry widely. But he was disgusted with London. His health was also weakening. On June 2, 1863 he wrote in his diary, "My twenty-fifth birthday ; not very cheerful. Feel as if I had lived a long time and done very little. Walked about by moon light in the evening." It was at this time that he received a call from Hicks at Dorchester to work as his assistant. He accepted the work and in July 1867, left London for his native village of Bockhampton.

Beginning of his literary career : At Bockhampton he regained his health and began to write poetry. He wrote his first novel '*The Poor Man and the Lady*' which was not published due to certain causes. In this novel he showed a contrast between the life he had seen in London and the familiar life of the Dorset village. Now Hicks died and Hardy began to help his successor. He came across Emma Lavinia Gifford who was a lovely girl of 29. They became great friends. She helped him in making a fair copy of his second novel

Desperate Remedies which was bitterly criticised. In 1872, he wrote his third novel '*Under the Greenwood Tree*.' It met with great success. He gave up his work. He wrote a series of articles drawing material from his own life which were later on published under the name of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* in 1873. Soon the sad news of Horace Moule's suicide reached him and deeply affected him. In 1873, he wrote another novel *Far From the Madding Crowd*, on the suggestion of his friend Leslie Stephen. It was also a success.

His first marriage : In August 1874, he married Emma Gifford who was very considerate to him. He completed *The Hand of Ethelberta* for another magazine but it disappointed his admirers. His wife longed for London so he shifted to the metropolis. Here he developed friendly relations with famous literary men like Edmund Gosse. In spite of every comfort he felt somewhat unhappy. He worte *The Return of the Native* which was great success and his financial condition much improved. He wrote anothei novel *The Trumpet-Major*. But again his health began to grow weak and he returned to his native village of Dorset. Here he wrote *Two on a Tower* in 1882 which further improved his financial condition. He purchased a plot of land near Dorchester to build a house there. Then followed his ambitious novel *The Mayor* of *Casterbridge*. This novel made him famous in England and America both. Soon he wrote another serious novel *The woodlanders* which owned as his favourite though it has many faults. But by this time his relations with his wife who loved London much, have become to grow estranged.

The last phase : In 1887 he went to Italy with his wife. After his return to Dorchester in the autumn of 1888 he composed his master-piece, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. He said afterwards, "I have put in it the best of me." This novel not only brought him money but also made him very famous. The death of his father shocked him this time. Then he wrote his last novel *Jude the Obscure*. It was much criticised and he determined to write no more novels and devoted himself to poetry. He wished to write some epic poem on Napoleon. *The Dynasts* is his great poetic achievement. It is the masterpiece of his thoughts and ideas. This epic

drama surprised all. He also wrote a collection of poems entitled *Songs of Twenty-five Years*. In July 1912, Emma died. Two years later in 1914, at the age of 74 Hardy married a younger woman of 35 which was not a wise step. But Florence Dugdale, his wife possessed poetic temperament and her care changed his later life.

Hardy—the man of great fame : Now honour was showered upon him from all sides. The Aberdeen University conferred upon him L L.D., and he became President of the Society of Dorset men in London. He was also given the Order of Merit by the King. In 1913, the Cambridge University conferred upon him the degree of D. Litt. He bacame an honorary fellow of Magdalene College. The Oxford University also honoured him with the degree of D. Litt. Some of his novels were successfully used for films. His residence, the Max Gate was always crowded with people who came to pay their respect to him. On his 78th birthday he was greeted with a collection of poems from famous English poets.

His Death: His 81st birthday proved to be his last. A group of young men of whom one hundred and six signed an address to him showed him great respect. They wrote: "In your novels and poems you have given us a tragic vision of life which is informed by your knowledge of character and relieved by the charity of your humour, and sweetened by your sympathy with human suffering and endurance. We have learnt from you that the proud heart can subdue the hardest fate, even in submitting to it . . . .

In all that you have written, you have shown the spirit of man, nourished by tradition and sustained by pride persisting through defeat." He wrote till the last moment in 1927. But he felt that his health had much weakened and his strength was gone. He continued to weaken and early in 1928, he died. His ashes were buried in Westminster Abbey.

Hardy the Man : Like many other literary figures there is quite a lot of misunderstandings about Hardy, the man. His writings, novels and poems alike, are tragic ; therefore, the natural conclusion is that he himself was a melancholy

man. A few habits and incidents of his life are quoted again and again to confirm this impression. It is said that he attended almost every funeral procession ; he was so sensitive that he felt pain when he saw a branch of a tree being lopped off. Even when he went to school, he took long and lonely walks. He was given to thoughts and meditation. Most of his novels and poems suggest that he was interested in tragic and gloomy things. Perhaps the happier aspects of life never attracted him. To say all this is to form a very hasty judgment about Hardy. In spite of the tragic view o life present in his novels, he was a man who had the greatest confidence in human life.Mr. A. Compton-Rickett who knew him for more than a quarter of a century has given the following impression of Hardy's character "My ultimate impression of his personality is diametrically opposed to the popular view. Spoken of so frequently as a melancholy man, who had a drab and pessimistic view of life, I have often thought how strangely different this is from the bright and jolly companion whom I knew . . . . He was a quite little man with sardonic eyebrows and twinkling eyes. Watch him trucked away in a corner of a rural inn, laughing heartily over some rustic tradition and telling in his turn a story of tragic or comic import." Perhaps this is a very correct estimate of Hardy, the man. He was, no doubt, very sensitive and a very keen observer of life. As a result of his observation he had noted that human life was not a simple affair. Moreover, he found Nature was indifferent to human values. This perplexed him very much. Therefore, quite often there is a sad sense of perplexity, almost tragic and pessimistic, in his novels. But his practical philosophy, he asserted, "is distinctly meliorist. What are my books—but one plea against man's inhumanity to man, woman and the lower animals ? . . . . Whatever may be the inherent good or evil of life, it is certain that man makes it much worse than it need be. When we have got rid of a thousand remediable ills, it will be time enough to determine whether the ill that is irremediable outweighs the good."

In fact, because of the tragic view of life in his novels and the treatment of sex, Hardy has been so much misunderstood that very often he has been called an atheist. Many

innocent men and women suffer in his novels, and they suffer a great deal. At times, it appears that Hardy had no faith in God and religion. But nothing is far from truth. In fact, he was such a sincere Christian at heart that he observed life very closely and sympathetically to point out how man was making himself worse. David Cecil, a noted critic, truly points out, "He was one of the most Christian spirits that ever lived. The ideal of character he presents to us—in Diggory and Tess, Marty and Giles—is, far more than that presented by many officially orthodox writers, a specifically Christian ideal : meek, merciful, pure in heart and peace-making, its highest virtue, a self-sacrificing love for others. Hardy's very pessimism is of a kind only possible to one closely wedded to Christian standards of value." From these remarks, and from the close study of Hardy's novels, it may be clear now that it is totally unjust to say that he did not believe in God and religion. He did believe in Christian values but unfortunately seeing the life around him and the age in which he was born, he could not share the Christian hope. As a result of this there is a touch of pessimism in his philosophy of life but nowhere does he lose his faith in man.

As regards his personal appearance, Charles Morgan thought that Hardy was "Bird-like . . . . like a small bird with a great head. He was not simple ; he had the formal subtlety peculiar to his own generation. There was something timid as well as something fierce ; as if the world had hurt him and he expected it to hurt him again. But what fascinated me above all was the contrast between the plainness, the quiet rigidity of his behaviour and the passionate boldness of his mind." Almost the same impression is given by John Cowper Powys, "There was much of the falcon about his aquiline nose and his hovering, and 'pouncing' eye glances, and intensity of regard that was increased by the slightness of his figure, by the curiously elfin tilt of his eyebrow, and by his trick of holding his head to one side as though the frailty of his form were constantly deprecating the terrible and serious passion of his thought. It is interesting to note how his second wife described him, " . . . a smile of exceptional sweetness, and his eyes were a clear

blue gray. His whole aspect was almost childlike in his sincerity and simplicity, the features being strongly marked . . . . his nose more Roman than aquiline. The nobility of his brow was striking."

The foregoing accounts make it clear that Hardy was a very interesting man. He was definitely religious; he sincerely believed in the highest values of life; and he was a good personal friend. Because of these qualities, one hundred and six younger writers wrote in an address to him on his 81st birthday as follows : "In your novels and poems you have given us a tragic vision of life which is informed by your knowledge of character and relieved by the charity of your humour, and sweetened by your sympathy with human suffering and endurance." Indeed, it is essential that we should form a clear conception of Hardy, the man, so that we do not approach his novels with a prejudiced mind. The popular impression is that he was a melancholy man and therefore he wrote tragic novels and poems. This is a total misunderstanding of his character. Perhaps it will be more correct to say that he was a highly religious man who, felt unhappy with certain things of life and therefore gave us a tragic vision in his novels only to point out that human life could be better if man would care for it in the right spirit. As David Cecil points out "The Christian virtues—fidelity, compassion, humility, were the most beautiful to him. These virtues might not be of no avail in the universe ; they might be born only to strive and suffer and be defeated ; all the same, he ranged himself under their banner."

Works of Thomas Hardy :

I. Novels and Stories :

1. Desperate Remedies (1871).

2. Under the Greenwood Tree ; or, The Mellstock Quire (1872).

3. A Pair of Blue Eyes (1873).

4. Far From the Madding Crowd (1874).

5. The Hand of Ethelberta—a comedy in chapters (1876).

6. The Return of the Native (1878).

7. The Trumpet-Major. (1880).

8. A Laodicean : or, The Castle of the De Stancys. A Story of To-day (1881).

9. Two on a Tower. A Romance (1882).

10. The Mayor of Casterbridge. The Life and Death of Man of Character (1886).

11. The Woodlanders (1887).

12. Wessex Tales (1888).

13. A Group of Noble Dames (1891).

14. Tess of the d'Urbervilles. A pure woman faithfully represented (1891).

15. Life's Little Ironies and A few Crusted Characters (1894).

16. Jude the obscure (1895).

17. The Well-Beloved ; A Sketch of a Temperament (1897).

II. Poems :

1. Wessex Poems and Other Verses (1898).
2. Poems of the Past and the Present (1901).
3. Time's Laughing-Stocks and Other Verses (1909).
4. Satires of Circumstances (1914).
5. Moments of Vision (1917).
6. Late Lyric ; and Earlier (1922).

III. Drama :

1. The Dynasts—Its first part was published in 1904 ; the second in 1906 and the third in 1908. There was a complete and collected edition of all the three parts in (1910).

2. The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwell at Tintagel in Lyonness (1923).

IV. Contributions to Periodicals :

1. How I built Myself a House ("Chambers' Journal", March 18th, 1865).

2. An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress ("New Quarterly Magazine", 1878).

3. The Romantic Adventures of Milkmaid ("Graphic" Summer Number, 1883).

4. The Waiting Supper ("Murray's Magazine", 1888).

5. The Profitable Reading of Fiction ("The Forum", March, 1888).

6. Candour in English Fiction ("New Review", January, 1890).

7. The Science of Fiction ("New Review", April, 1891).

8. Why I Don't Write Plays ("Pall Mall Gazette", Augst, 1892).

Classification of Hardy's Novels : From the list of his works, you can see that Hardy wrote 17 novels. Various attempts have been made to classify these novels. In other words, critics have tried to point out that some of his novels are Romances, some are novels of Character and Environment, and still others, novels of Experiment. The problem of classification is really difficult. Anyway, it hardly matters what one calls his novels ; the fact remains that he wrote some masterpieces which will last as long as human life itself.

Duffin in his famous book on Hardy has offered the following classification :

1. Novels of Character and Environment : Under this head he includes the following novels—"Under the Greenwood Tree", "Far From the Madding Crowd", "The Return of the Native", "The Mayor of Casterbridge", "The Woodlanders", "Tess of the d'Urbervilles", "Jude the Obscure".

It may also be noted that these are also the greatest novels of Thomas Hardy. Almost all of them are tragedies. The fame of Hardy depends upon these. The prescribed novel "Tess" has been called the novel of Character and Environment. Perhaps it is very justified to say so. The novel is mainly the story of an innocent girl, Tess. It shows how the character of Tess develops from time to time in different circumstances and environments.

2. *Romances and Fantasies* : Under this head, these novels have been included : "A Pair of Blue Eyes", "The Trumpet-Major", "Two on a Tower", "The Well-Beloved".

3. *Novels of Ingenuity and Experiment* : Under this head, are included the following novels : "Desperate Remedies", "The Hand of Ethelberta", "A Laodicean".

Besides Duffin, Professor Lascelles Abercrombie has offered yet another classification of Hardy's novels. He divides them into two types :

1. The Dramatic Novels.
2. The Epic Novels.

By Epic novels he means those novels of Hardy which contain a single story, of a single person, written on a big scale with a vast background. For example, "Tess" is an Epic novel. As one reads this novel, the impression gained is of a very vast background. Though the story is written against the background of the Vale of Blackmore, yet it becomes the story of the whole of human life. It deals with the rise and fall in the destiny of a single person, yet by virtue of the vast background and epic treatment of the theme, the whole story acquires a universal meaning.

In the novels called dramatic, one person alone does not dominate the story. Our interest, on the other hand, centres round a group of characters whose actions and motives clash with each other. In a dramatic plot, conflict is the main thing and because of this conflict some of the novels of Hardy have been properly called dramatic novels. Besides conflict, there are some secondary plots also in such novels. The

onvelist does not come to the forefront in the novel to comment on the actions of his characters ; the story unfolds itself. In other words, incident after incident takes place carrying the plot forward to a climax. Thus, in a dramatic novel there are a number of dramatic episodes. Four great novels of Hardy can be classified as dramatic novels; "Far From the Madding Crowd", "The Return of the Native", "The Woodlanders" and "The Mayor of Casterbridge".

Even this classification, however, is not very satisfactory. For example, a novel like "The Mayor of Casterbridge" can be called the epic novel as well, besides being a dramatic novel.

Lionel Johnson, another noted critic of Hardy, has made yet another classification. He classifies the novels of Hardy into three groups : Tragedies, Comedies and Idylls. But even this classification is very unsatisfactory. In fact, the best way to classify the novels of Hardy is to accept in part the scheme of Duffin and in part the scheme of Professor Lascelles Abercrombie.

It is by far the safest thing to call some of his greatest novels as novels of Character and Environment. They may also be called the epic novels because of the vast background against which they are written and the large scale on which the actions of these novels take place. The reader of Hardy should, however, note that the point of classification is not so important as the reading of the novel in the right spirit.

Brief outlines of Hardy's Major Novels : *1. Under the Greenwood Tree (1872)* : This is the first important novel of Hardy. It is an idyll of two lovers—Dick Dewy and Fancy Day. Like other novels of Hardy, it also describes the rural life of Wessex. The scene is of Mellstock village. Dick Dewy is the son of the local 'tranter' and Fancy Day is a school-mistress. After overcoming the difficulties that come in their way, they are finally married. But all is not smooth there. Fancy Day, though engaged to Dick, accepts the temptation of an offer of marriage by the Vicar but in the end she realises her fault and the novel ends happily.

2. *A Pair of Blue Eyes (1873)* : This novel was first written in the form of articles and was later on published as a novel in 1873. The author has used material from his own life and it may well be called an autobiography : It describes the story of a young architect, Stephen Smith who comes to Endelstow to restore a church tower. He falls in love with Elfride Swancourt, the blue-eyed daughter of the Vicar. Stephen comes of an ordinary family so the Vicar disagrees with the idea of Elfride's marriage with Stephen. Stephen and Elfride run away secretly to perform nuptial rites. But Elfride being unfirm changes his mind. Stephen is disappointed and accepts an offer of service in India for better luck. In his absence Henry Knight, a man of letters whose life Elfride saves on a cliff, takes his place. They are engaged. But soon a woman reveals to Knight what she knows about Elfride. He breaks off the engagement. After sometime he meets Stephen and comes to know the truth. They both rush to Cornwall to meet her but only to know that the train which carried them also carried her dead body. Thus the novel ends in a tragedy.

3. *Far From the Madding Crowd (1874)* : The theme of this novel is the unselfish devotion of a lover for his beloved. Gabriel Oak, a shephered is the hero of this novel. He loves and serves the capricious Bathsheba Everdeens for many years with a humble and unselfish devotion. But she does not return his love. She is won by Sergeant Troy, a fascinating gallant soldier, who deserts Fanny Robin and lets her die in a work house. Later on Troy is murdered by Boldwood who also loves Bethsheba passionately but he becomes mad. Gabriel Oak who is always loyal to Bathsheba, is in the end married with her.

4. *The Return of the Native (1878)* : The action of the novel takes place on the sombre Egdon Heath near Warehem in Dorset. There is a triangular contest everywhere in the novel. The hero of this novel is Wildeve. He first loves Thomasin Yeobright whom he marries and then Eustacia Vye. Thomasin Yeobright is also loved by the humble Diggory Venn who watches her like an angel and helps her whenever any misfortune befalls her. But she

rejects him. In the meantime Thomasin's cousin, Clym Yeobright, a diamond merchant in Paris, being disgusted with the vanity and uselessness of his profession returns to his village to become a true teacher. Eustacia Vye is charmed by the splendour of Paris. She falls in love with him and both are married. Her dream of leading a happy life in Paris is shattered, as Clym loses his eyesight and becomes a furze-cutter on the heath. She becomes the cause of estrangement between Clym and his mother and unintentionally of her death. When Clym comes to know of this and of her relations with Wildeve there is a violent struggle between them. Eustacia and Wildeve run away but both are drowned in the course of their flight. Clym considers himself to be responsible for their and his mother's death and becomes a preacher. In the end Thomasin marries Diggory Venn.

5. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (*1886*) : This is his most ambitious novel. It is a story of the rise and fall of a powerful character Michael Henchard who though a hay-trusser becomes the Mayor of Casterbridge and in the end is again reduced to exterme poverty and meets a pathetic end. The scene is set at Casterbridge (Dorchester). The novel opens at a fair. Henchard in drunk and sells away his wife and daughter to Newson. When he returns to senses he realises his mistake and swears never to touch wine. Because of hard work and honesty, he rises to the Mayorship of Casterbridge. He is engaged with Lucetta. He has an able assistant Farfrae. But after eighteen years his wife returns to him for Newson has been falsely reported dead. They are reunited. His wife tells him that Elizabeth, the child, is their daughter. Soon she dies and Henchard knows the truth about the girl. In the meantime he quarrels with Farfrae who proves to be a foil to Henchard in every field. He begins drinking. Elizabeth, his step-daughter is his only comfort but she too is taken away by her father Newson who suddenly reappears. Prior to it Lucetta has married Farfrae and met her death. Now Henchard is left friendless and all alone and dies wretchedly in a hut. Farfrae and Elizabeth Jane are united in the end.

6. *The Woodlanders* (*1887*) : The scene of this novel is set in the wooded country on the outskirts of the

Blackmoor Vale in Dorest. Giles Winter-bourne is the hero of the novel who carries on the apple and cider trade. He is betrothed to Grace Melbury, daughter of a timber-merchant of Little-Hintock. When Grace returns after finishing her education at a fashionable school, she thinks herself superior to Giles. Further the decline in Giles'se economic condition leads to the breaking off of the engagement. Grace is married to Edred Fitzpiers a fascinating doctor. But Grace doubts the integrity of her husband and believes that he has got some illicit relations with a country girl, Suke Damson. Fitzpiers being a selfish man leaves his wife and comes to a wealthy widow, Felice Charmond. Grace's fear of divorce brings her to faithful Giles. When Fitzpiers returns with Charmond from his travels abroad, Grace rushes to Giles's cottage for shelter. But Giles and Charmond die. Grace and Fitzpiers again united. Side by side the story of a poor plain girl Marty South who loves Giles is also beautifully developed. Both Marty and Grace stand beside Giles's grave but in the end when Grace and Fitzpiers are reunited Marty is left alone standing beside the tomb of Giles.

7. Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1891) : 'Tess' has universally been regarded as Hardy's master-piece. It describes the life of a very beautiful girl named Tess. For a long time all goes on well. One day her father John Durbeyfield knows from a person that he is descended from the noble d'Urbervilles. He begins to dream of high things. His wife Joan thinks that Tess will get a good match. They send Tess to a rich lady, d'Urberville with the hope that she will get a good job in her poultry farm. But she meets the lady's son Alec d'Urberville who seduces her and makes her pregnant. She returns home unhappy.

After sometime she gives birth to a child. She has to face a lot of difficulties on account of it. She works as a dairy maid on the Talbothay's farm. The child dies. Here she meets Angel Clare, the son of a clergyman. He loves her and both decide to marry. Before the marriage is performed, Tess writes a letter to Angel informing him about her past life. But somehow he does not get that letter. Tess finds it hidden under the carpet of his room. When they are married

Angel tells her his secret and asks her if she has any. She also tells him her past life. Angel deserts her. But now her father being dead, she has to face many difficulties. She goes to Angel's house but does not meet anyone there. She works at some farms. She is again seduced by Alec and her poverty compels her to surrender herself to a villain whom she does not like. But she longs to see Angel who meets her too late. When he finds her with Alec, he returns sad. She murders Alec and overtakes Angel. The following morning she is arrested and sentenced to death. In this way a pure woman pays her debt to the social code.

8. *Jude the Obscure* (1895): This is his last novel for after it he devoted himself to poetry. It deals with the life story of a South-Wessex villager named Jude Fawley. The author describes how Jude's intellectual aspirations are left unfulfilled because of a sensuous temperament, lack of character and play of circumstances. He wants to become a scholar but his life is full of disappointments. In his early life when he works as a stone-mason to support his passion for reading he falls in love with Arabella Donn, 'a mere female animal' and is compelled to marry her. But she soon deserts him. Now he again resumes his studies and wishes to become a priest. This time he falls in love with his cousin Sue, a schoolmistress. But she to his great disappointment marries an elderly schoolmaster, Phillotson. He tries to supress his passon for Sue but invain. Being disgusted with her husband, Sue runs to Jude. Though as a result of divorce Jude is free to marry Sue, yet their relations debar Jude from becoming a priest. They go down the hill. Their children die tragically. Sue in agony of remorse goes back to Philotson. Jude being heart-broken takes to drinking and dies miserably.

———

CHAPTER II

AGE OF HARDY AND WORKING OF SOME INFLUENCES UPON HIS MIND

Age of Hardy : An understanding of the age of Hardy, that is the time when Hardy lived and wrote his novels, is very essential for a full appreciation of his novels. A great writer, no doubt, is a unique person; he has his own ideas, his own vision, his own values of life. In spite of this he is influenced by his age, by the times in which he lives. To this extent he is the product of his age. Hardy, in spite of his personal vision, was very much a child of his age. Therefore, it becomes at once important for a student of Hardy to have some idea of the age in which Hardy lived. The Age of Hardy in English literature follows the age of Tennyson. The first Jubilee of Queen Victoria was held in 1887 and it denoted the end of the Age of Tennyson. The remaining fourteen years of the Queen's reign may be regarded as leading to the new century. Tennyson died in 1893 and no great personality remained to interpret the sentiments of the British nation. At the same time, certain definite changes were taking place in the minds and ideas of the British people. No longer was there a grand simplicity and unity of purpose throughout Creation as Tennyson saw it. Giving the characteristics of the Age of Hardy, Hudson writes: "The old hope in the ultimate discovery of one universal truth gave place to the disturbing contemplation of an endless series of competing truths. Dogma was dead. With this change of outlook, the apparently solid foundation which had sustained the Victorian Age began to crumble, and the cause lay as much in certain defects in the 19th century popular idealism as in the impatience of the new generations." Thus, Hardy lived in a period of change and transition, of old values disappearing and no new ones fully establishing themselves, of trouble and conflict.

During the 40 years between 1887 and 1928 (called the Age of Hardy) many intellectual, scientific and agricultural changes had taken place. The old Victorian beliefs and ideas were fast disappearing. The new ones did not carry much conviction. Science was progressing by leaps and bounds; technology had been introduced in many walks of life, particularly in agriculture. The old faith in religion was gradually diminishing. Industrial towns had come up. Agricultural labour was migrating from the villages to the towns which tempted it to new jobs. But very often the town life brought more misery and unhappiness than was ever known to the simple village folk. Hardy lived during this period and noted all these changes in human life and values very carefully. The experience that he gained by observing these changes in the English life of his time provided him with the subject-matter of his novels and poems.

The one thing which affected Hardy most deeply was the change in the agricultural set-up at that time. Because of the rapid growth of industries in England, and because of free trade, agriculture began to decline. The consequences of this were miserable; it is often called the agricultural tragedy of 1870—1902. Rider Haggard, a social historian of the time reports, "Free trade has filled the towns and emptied our countryside; it has gorged the banks but left our rickyards bare." In other words the agricultural economy was suffering at the expense of the growth of industries in England. No doubt, in certain cases the condition of labourers had improved, but there had been quite a heavy loss in other respects. The same historian writes again, "It is impossible to take a favourable view of the prospects of the land, or of any class connected with it, in Dorsetshire. "This situation forms the substance of Hardy's important novels. It is also an important part of the experience behind his poetry. The 25 years of rural collapse and misery were the years of the composition of his novels. It is to be carefully noted that Hardy's narrative art takes both its material and its strength from the agricultral context. The details of each of his novels refer directly or by implication to the contemporary environment, and the story of each makes imaginative comment upon the contemporary tragedy.

As early as 1846, Disraeli, later to be the Prime Minister of England, had prophesied the ruin of agriculture as a result of Free Trade in corn. But for 20 years the conditions remained fairly good in agriculture; there was greater prosperity; farmers and landlords repaired and rebuilt the farm-houses and outbuildings, and added new cottages to the estates. Rent and profits increased, but the labourers' wages did not rise, and during the winter the family often depended upon the easily exploited labour of wife and children. The railroads had brought the towns nearer to the countrymen. They began to leave the country tempted by higher wages in the industry and attractions of the town. The exodus of agricultural labourers began. In 1871 the temporary prosperity in farmers' life also came to an end. As a result of imports of cheap food, agricultre continued to decline. By 1880 thousands had joined the 'general labourer' group in the towns, and thousands had left with their families. During the two years when Hardy at work on "Tess of the d'Urbervilles," roamed the Dorset country-side, he felt misereble and very unhappy by the sight of great disaster, buildings crumbled, fences collapsed, roads decayed, and farm-houses abandoned. By 1895 Hardy was writing "Jude the Obscure," a novel concerned particularly with the breakaway from the village. But the towns created their own trouble. These lost labourers faced disease, difficulties, unemployment and insecurity worse than any in the country-side. The farmers were poor and losing heart. "Not only 'Tess' and 'Jude', but each of the great Wessex novels treats in imaginative form of the disease of our peasantry and the collapse of our agriculture", points out Douglas Brown. The tragedy of the Exodus of the agricultural workers from the villages and the country-side, and what that tragedy represents, forms one of Hardy's continual themes. Conditions in agriculture were bad ; the cottage accommodation of the country-side was insufficient. On the other hand, the wages in towns were higher ; hearsay and the newspapers had suggested their own pictures of the town life. These poor men and women did not know that in the slums and tenements of overcrowded towns the conditions were still worse. Yet during the last years of the century it seemed that the only chance for a young or enterprising person in the

country-side was to leave it. Then, uprooted, he found in the towns casual labour or none, disappointment, and perhaps an old age of poverty. If we read carefully Hardy's novels, we find this agricultural tragedy fully represented there. Through Oak, Winterborne, Henchard, Tess, Hardy tries to establish his belief of the potential value of agricultural life, and to celebrate the naturalness of men and woman engaged in the skills and necessities of agriculture.

Influences to which he was susceptible : No doubt, every person in this world is born with certain intellectual and moral qualities of his own. But at the same time, as he lives in this world, moves about in society, comes in contact with all sorts of people, he is influenced and moulded by them to a certain degree. These influences in the case of an artist are generally very important. Because of a sensitive nature the artist reacts to his surroundings and the people around him very sharply. These influences work in him slowly and steadily and ultimately find their expression in his art. Thomas Hardy, the man, right from his childhood was influenced by his parents, his village and county, his wife, his friends, by contemporary thought and philosophers. All these influences can be traced in his novels. If one knows how he was influenced by all these forces, one is in a better position to understand the works of Thomas Hardy.

To begin with, he was very much influenced by his mother. She always guided his reading and suggested new books. She was the person who made him familiar with the 'Authorized Version of the Bible'. As child and boy, he heard it read every Sunday in Stinsford Church. His mother was greatly attached to the Church of England, and her boy 'was kept strictly at Church on Sundays till he knew the morning and evening services by heart'. The influence of the Bible is very obvious in his works. There are many Biblical allusions in his novels. Even the language of the Bible became a part of his style. As regards his mother, he used to say when he grew old how much he was indebted to the wisdom and guidance of his mother, and to the reading she suggested.

His father too influenced him in his own way. Hardy inherited from him the love of music. Hardy was of an

ecstatic temperament, and some of the folk-dance tunes moved him to tears. He learned to fiddle while still young, and took a share in the music-making at village festivities. This love of music finds its expression in the many beautiful scenes that occur in the novels of Hardy. In describing many a scene he is said to be 'poetic'. This quality is there because of his inherited love of music.

Then he was very powerfully influenced by life in Dorchester where he was born. Living in the parish of Stinsford, near Dorchester, he became familiar witn the difficulties and rewards of farming life. He never forgot the labourer who died of stravation and was found under a hedge, or the woman who was publicly hanged at Dorchester for a moral crime, or the ravages of cholera in the unsanitary cottages of villages near Dorchester. At the same time, he could never forget the life of farmers with their joys and sorrows. All these things made such an everlasting impression on his mind that in the presentation of rural life Hardy is by far the greatest novelist that England has produced. When he was a boy he went to the High School at Dorchester. He was at this time a solitary and thoughtful boy, who enjoyed taking the daily walk from Bockhampton to Dorchester alone. The walks, whether by daylight or in darkness left with him a store of memories. During these years, his attachment to his native surroundings grew deep. It is important to note that he could write his best novels not while he lived in London but when he was in Dorset or Dorchester. 'Far From the Madding Crowd', 'The Return of the Native', 'The Mayor of Casterbridge', 'Tess'—his masterpieces were written when he lived in the heart of Dorset. His wife, no doubt loved London life, and Hardy went to London quite often with her. But the life there could never become the part of his art. His wife, Mrs. F.E. Hardy, points out "That residence in or near a city tended to force mechanical and ordinary productions from his pen, concerning ordinary social life and habits." In fact, Wessex and its life alone inspired Hardy to great artistic achievements. Blunden, in his famous biography of Hardy, writes. "All that Hardy felt and reasoned about mankind was founded in a particular apprehension of 'local hearts and heads'." In simple words it means that his native

place, with its rural surroundings and farming life and country traditions, inspired him most. Nobody could have ever painted the memorable scenes of Egdon Heath, of Talbothays Farm, of harvest reaping, that occur in the novels of Hardy without an intimate knowledge of them.

The next important influence in the life of Hardy was that of John Hicks, the Dorchester architect. At sixteen, Hardy was a weak child for his age, and his future career was something of a problem for the family. Hicks solved the problem by taking him on as a pupil. He was a good master, very kind and sensible and a well-educated man. He trained Hardy well, and yet left him leisure enough to carry on his other studies. For many years to come, when he was trying hard to establish himself as a poet and a novelist, architecture helped him to earn a living. Besides helping him to earn a living, architecture stayed with Hardy in another way as well. Blunden, the noted biographer of Hardy, writes, "The training he had undergone meant an additional rightness in his observation as a general habit, which was so valuable a resource in his novels and his other writings ; the singularities and visible strange histories of ancient buildings impressed on him, still young, the analogous unexpectedness and incongruity of the fabric of human affairs." In simple language it means that Hardy's training in architecture helped him in observing things closely and exactly. This habit of mind helped him very much in presenting his scenes in his novels in very good details. By way of example the death of horse Prince in 'Tess' is described in so good details that the scene sticks out in memory for a long time. Architecture also brought Hardy in contact with old buildings with their own peculiarities and strange histories. He found the same thing in the affairs of human life.

Next door to Hicks's office, William Barnes, the poet and philologist, kept a school. Hardy went to him very often with his intellectual problems and had lively arguments with him. He developed for him an affection and admiration which he never lost.

Yet another man to enter the life of Hardy and to influence him was Horace Moule, a classical scholar of Queen's

College, Cambridge. He was a son of the Vicar of Fordington, and the family was one of distinction. The Vicar himself had long since impressed Mrs. Hardy, and Thomas Hardy always remembered how bravely he had managed during the time of the cholera ravages. In 1854, this clergyman published a series of Letters to His Royal Highness Prince Albert on the Dwellings and Condition of Eleven Hundred of the Working Classes and Poor of Fordington. This report must have added to the knowledge of Hardy. Hardy remained a lifelong friend of the family. Horace Moule was the most gifted of all the brothers. He talked frequently with Hardy of Greek literature, and at the same time introduced him to contemporary problems of thought and faith. He guided some of Hardy's readings and studies. He sympathised with his aspirations to become an author. Horace Moule was a convinced Christian. His influence with Hardy was for many years very great. While Hardy was at London he would pay frequent visits to Cambridge to meet Horace Moule. In September, 1873, the news came that Horace Moule had committed suicide in his room at Queen's College. Hardy was deeply affected. In spite of his ability and brilliance, Horace Moule had suffered very much in life. His memory never left Hardy. It seems possible that the peculiarly unhappy details of the suicide are reflected in certain incidents in the novels of Hardy. Nobody can doubt that the character of Jude Fawley in the novel "Jude the Obscure" is created in the manner of Horace Moule's life. Just as Horace Moule suffered because of his intellectual aspirations and enthusiasm, Jude Fawley suffers in the novel.

At the age of 22, after completing his training as architect in Dorchester, Hardy went to London to advance both his architectural and his literary ambitions. Here he joined the staff of a young architect named Arthur Blomfield. Arthur Blomfield also exercised considerable influence on young Thomas Hardy. He was a man of great kindness and insight, and a keen musician. Thus, in his company Hardy's love of music was further strengthened.

Hardy had married Emma Lavinia Gifford. She was full of vitality and deeply interested in books. They, on the

whole, led a happy married life, though there were tensions at times. But there's had been a solidly founded union. Emma was orthodox in religion. She was fond of social life and London. Douglas Brown, in his book on Thomas Hardy, says : "Something of her pride and waywardness, and something of his bewliderness, went to the making of the heroines of the novel." Thus, it is clear that something of his wife found its expression in heroine's like Bathsheba and Eustacia Vye. Hardy himself wrote about his wife as follows : "In spite of the differences between us which it would be affectation to deny, and certain painful delusions she suffered from at times, my life is intensely sad to me now, without her."

Among philosophers and thinkers, Huxley, Mill, Darwin, Herbert Spencer exercised a very deep influence on Hardy. Hardy read "Newman's Apologia" but he was not convinced by it. The reading of J. S. Mill destroyed very much his religious faith. Herbert Spencer's "First Principles" further encouraged his agnosticism. In Darwin's writings, he studied the evolutionary processes, and found evidence of the cruelty and pain present in the struggle for existence, one of his deepest points of interests and study. Douglas Brown points out, "These four great men (Huxley, Mill, Herbert Spencer and Darwin) impressed him very powerfully, and he met and talked with many of their followers." Hardy also made friends with Leslie Stephen who also convinced him in rational enquiry.

When the First World War broke out in 1914, it destroyed any belief in Hardy of the gradual improvement of man. He read G. E. Moore's "Principia Etchica" and the works of Bergson. In his later years the influence of the German philosopher Schopenhaeur became very great. Schopenhaeur's philosophy led him more and more towards pessimism and determinism.

As regards literary influences, Hardy seems to have read deeply George Crabbe, Shelley, Wordsworth, Shakespeare and Keats. Among the novels he read may be mentioned "Tom Jones", "The Bride of Lammermoor," 'Kenilworth', 'Tristram Shandy', 'Vanity Fair', 'Clarissa Harlow', and

'Pamela.' He also read popular novelists of his time, Trollope and Wilkie Collins. Among the classical writers he knew Sophocles, Virgil, Horace and Ovid. He read the "Iliad" with deep interest. Mrs. Hardy writes in "Early Life" about Hardy's classical readings as follows : "He grew so familiar with his authors that in his walks to and fro from the town he often caught himself soliloquizing in Latin on his various projects." It should, however, be noted that Hardy read more poetry than anything else.

Besides all these influences of men and books, one of the most powerful influences on the life of Hardy was the changing pattern of life in the 19th century in England. Hardy was born in an agricultural society but he lived to see the coming of the industrial revolution. The result was that he was a witness to a clash between the old order and the new. He saw it with his own eyes that old beliefs were becoming weak with the advance of science. People were gradually losing faith in religion. But the misfortune was that nothing could replace religion to give faith to the simple people who lived in thousands in villages. These simple people felt uprooted and there was very often unhappiness in life. Not only this, Hardy was also a witness to the break up of rural life. The industrial towns were attracting many young men from the villages for new opportunities of employment. The result was that peaceful family life in villages almost came to an end. All these disturbances in the lives of the innocent village-folk and in the agricultural economy are very faithfully recorded by Hardy in his novels.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL AND HARDY'S PLACE IN IT

The novel had its real beginning in the 18th century in England. Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne were the four major novelists of the time who made the English novel in the real sense of the term. No doubt, before them there had been certain attempts at novel writing. There were the Italian and Spanish romances of the 14th and 15th centuries which were brought into England and read eagerly and imitated by several persons. Sir Phillip Sidney's "The Arcadia" (1580) may be considered as a product of the influence of these foreign romances in the field of English literature. Some contemporaries of Shakespeare like Lodge and Nash also contributed to the development of the English novel. But so far nothing important had been done and none of these writers can be called a novelist in the modern sense of the term. In their books characterization was very poor; they hardly knew how to construct a good plot; even their prose was not flexible enough to be used for the purposes of the novel. At this stage, John Bunyan published his famous allegory "The Pilgrim's Progress". This book definitely made some advance on the books written in this style before. In "The Pilgrim's Progress" characterization is deep and searching; there are psychological touches even. The story is not merely a string of different episodes; it has a certain link particularly because of the presence of the hero, Christian, throughout the story. As a result of this book, many critics have called Bunyan the father of the English novel. But it is a very controversial statement. When Bunyan wrote "The Pilgirm's Progress", he was not writing a novel; he was simply writing a layman's Bible. In other words, the book was mainly written from a religious point of view, and expressed the emotional and religious conflict that went on in

the heart of Bunyan himself. In the first quarter of the 18th century came another writer, Daniel Defoe. He published his famous book "Robinson Crusoe". This book is also a landmark in the history of the English novel. It has a very interesting story, very realistic characterization, and a style which is suitable for the purposes of fiction writing. And yet many more things had to be done before the novel could be established as a definite form in England. In 1740 Richardson published "Pamela". It is the first really important novel and perhaps Richardson can be called the first English novelist. Then came Fielding. He published his "Joseph Andrews" which was followed by "Tom Jones". When Fielding wrote "Tom Jones", he knew what he was doing. He was certain that he was establishing a new kind of writing in England. From this day the English novel made it's real beginnings. Smollett and Sterne also came out with very successful novels and showed how the novel could be written in many different ways.

In the 19th century, the novel assumed a new phase and got a new popularity because of the genius of Sir Walter Scott. He brought history to the service of the novel and became the father of historical romantic novels. If he brought history to the service of the novel, Jane Austen made peaceful domestic life the subject matter of the novel. Not only this, she brought a very great artistic perfection to the art of the novel. In her hands the novel became a very finely shaped thing of art. She was followed by some minor novelists. But soon came the two giants, Dickens and Thackeray, who took the novel into different parts. Dickens was not very good at plot construction but he told a story very well. Besides, he was a very great master of the art of presenting a character from the outside. He introduced a very rich element of humour in the English novel. Charlotte Bronte, and Mrs. Gaskell and George Eliot were other major novelists.

The age of Dickens and Thackeray was followed by the age of Antony Trollope, Charles Kingsley, Charles Reade, George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, and Robert Louis Stevenson. Here we are mainly concerned with Thomas Hardy and his contribution to the development of the English novel.

As regards his place in the development of the English novel it may be said that he belongs to the old as well as the new. In other words in certain matters Hardy is just like his Victorian predecessors. He constructs plot as Fielding would construct and he uses the novel for almost the same purpose as Dickens used it. But he is a modern novelist as well. He is modern not in his technique but in his ideas. Hardy's ideas and philosophy, his treatment of love and sex, his frank discussion of many problems of religion and faith, are definitely in advance of his time. In the novels of Dickens and also Thackeray love is treated as an emotion, *i.e.*, it is to be felt and not experienced. But in the novels of Hardy love is an emotion as well as an experience. Thus, Hardy increased the range of subject-matter in the English novel. It was a very important contribution.

Yet another major contribution by Hardy to the development of the English novel was that he introduced into it a "poetic intensity". It means that the novel was conceived on a higher plane than ever before. Thus, Hardy's contributions are of great importance to the development of the English novel. Without him the English novel would not have been what it is today.

CHAPTER IV

PLOT CONSTRUCTION IN HARDY'S NOVEL

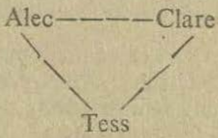
Hardy's plots are conditioned by his upbringing as are his characters and setting. They are coloured by the ballad stories. In his comedy there is farcical humour of village life. In his stories there are fueds, wronged girls, true lovers, forlorn maidens and dashing Don Jauns. Hardy accepted such stories since he wanted to show the fate of modern intellectual man in the contemporary world. For this purpose he had to elevate the subject matter over form. Further because he was interested in epic and tragic subjects, he wanted form capable of achieving tragic and epic dignity. So he discarded the happy ending. Form he took from Fielding and Henry James. He emphasised action to attract the modern mind. He shows more than what things really are in order to emphasise them. Hence importance of characters and not of plots. For this purpose he goes to Shakespeare and Scott. When his plot reaches the crises his visualization burns all the brighter.

As a matter of fact, the imagination of Hardy works by flashes like Dickens or Scott. When it is in operation it dazzles the reader but when it goes out the reader is left in the darkness. Further Hardy had weaker critical faculties. He was a great artist but not great craftman. He could not fit his inspiration. His plot is clear, but his hold on design is slack and clumsy. In "Two on the Tow" the plot has no organic structure. It is feeble. Hardy's creative genius is responsible for this defect. The *Return of the Native* and *Woodlanders* have lyrical force. His themes are suitable for lyrics and ballads. Hardy in order to make room for all his pictures ekes out the plot by repeating the same incidents in slightly varied form. The result is that his characters do not develop.

The plot of the *Return of the Native* concludes with the marriage of Ven and Thomasion but Hardy did not originally intend to do so . . . Venn is a spirit who appears only at the time when Thomasion is in her crises. They both like Eustacia and Clym would have failed to achieve happiness if the publisher had not requested him for the change of design. Hardy regretted 'for the modification of his design, which interfered with the aesthetic image of Venn. Hardy accepted the opinion of his publisher. Otherwise Thomasion would have been left alone in her prime. The publisher is responsible for the probability and not the auther. She ought to have accepted a lover so attractive and beneficiant as Ven.

In *Tess* and *Jude*, there is no probability. Both the books describe the noble persons unrelieved from misfortune came to complete catastrophe. Hardy started the books convincingly but in both, in two third of the way, his imagination got out of hand and culminated into dark tragedy. (See the questions on plots from the individual study of the novels.)

Most of Hardy's novels of are built up solidly round a love situation, generally of a complicated nature. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is not a love-story in any important sense but in all the other novels the plot takes its rise from the fact of two or more men loving one woman, or two or more women loving one man, or from a combination of these two types of situations. In *Tess* we can represent the plot by means of a simple triangle :



In other novels the arrangement of the people who are united by love relations is more complex. But the theme is simple and is developed with great force. Thus, the next point that is to be noted about Hardy's plot construction is that he adopts a method of the broad simple outline. This point can be illustrated by "Tess of the d'Urbervilles". Its plot is superbly simple. There is no

complexity in action. Tess meets d'Urberville, and is seduced : She meets Clare, and is wooed and won ; the two facts come into conflict and the tragedy follows. Nothing could be more simple. Yet within this simple outline Hardy offers a very great drama of an innocent soul. The *Mayor of Casterbridge* is simple in another way. It is a one-figure story, and shows us very powerfully the conflict in Henchard's soul. In fact, the scheme of all his great novels can be stated in few sentences.

An other point of importance about Hardy's plot construction is that his training as an architect helped him in designing symmetrical plots. No doubt, sometimes his plots are spoiled by too much interference of accidental happenings and the play of chance. In spite of this defect the fact remains that he can construct a plot in a very interesting manner. Blunden, the noted critic of Hardy points out, "The training he had undergone (as an architect) meant an additional rightness in his observation as a general habit, which was so valuable a resource in his novels and his other writings." Regarding his plots, Cazamian, a noted French critic writes : "His plots grow out of elementary passions : ambition, greed, love, jealousy and the thirst for knowledge ; and the springs which move them are psychological." But the development of the story is crossed at every moment by accidents which interrupt them. Chance is as it were an invisible third party in all the relationships of human beings. Yet, as has been pointed out above, his early training as an architect gave him a sure sense of construction.

Generally, the critics have made much of one defect in Hardy's plot construction. They repeatedly point out that fate and chance play so important a part in his novels that the plot does not develop on its own. Walter Allen, a modern critic, points out, 'Hardy is intent to show that the stars in their courses fight against the aspiring, the man or woman, who would rise above the common lot through greatness of spirit or passion.' Here his ploblem was difficult indeed, and it is not surprising he never solved it. It is silly to blame Hardy for the emphasis he places on coincidence ; he simply believed in coincidence. "But it should be clear that for the

most part Hardy's plots are self-supporting. However great the play of an external fate, the life or motive which is at the centre of each is essentially psychological. A master psychologist, he is concerned not so much with what must have happened, but with how it must have happened. In other words, the logic and continuity of incidents becomes less important ; the struggle and conflict within the heart of a character becomes more important.

The failures in the management of his plots matter less in Hardy than they would in any other novelist. They are botches, but they do not ruin the work, because though large enough when measured in terms of plot they are small when seen against the vastness and the strength of the design behind the plot.

Another minor defect in Hardy's plot construction is that he is not very resourceful, *i.e.*, not very inventive. In other words, he cannot invent many types of plots. His plots are generally based on one situation and that is love. In this connection one of the critics of Hardy points out that he is the novelist of situation rather than a novelist of plot. He is usually master of the central incidents but his control of surrounding circumstances is weak. He has great moments of artistic creations but he fails as well.

Yet in spite of these defects in construction, Hardy was able to give English fiction a grandeur and sublimity unknown to it before. When we consider him, naturally we have to go back to Elizabethan drama, to Shakespeare, and to Greek tragedians among the ancients.

CHAPTER V

CHARACTERIZATION IN HARDY'S NOVELS

A novelist's greatness is often judged by his capacity for characterization. From this point of view, Hardy can be considered as one of the greatest novelists in English literatture. Here too he has his limitations but within those limitations he has created wonderful persons whom humanity will never forget. There is Michael Henchard ("The Mayor of Casterbridge"), the giant of impulse; Gabriel Oak ("Far From the Madding Crowd"), the strong and self-sacrifioing; Angel Clare ("Tess"), a pure spirit of intellect, merciless as winter skies; Jude Fawley ("Jude the Obscure"), the stone-mason of infinite hopeless aspirations. Then there are many more. In females, we have a gallery of everlasting delight. Tess, Sue, Bathsheba, Elizabeth Jane, Eustacia are memorable names.

The first point of consideration regarding a novelist's capacity for characterization is his "range". By "range" is meant the sphere of life from which a novelist draws his characters. For example, a novelist can present his characters from the upper class, the middle class, and the poor. He can present saints as well as sinners in his novels. A novelist like Tolstoy can present human beings from many spheres of life. This is called a novelist's "range". Thus, we say that the range of Tolstoy is big. Compared with that of some great novelists, Hardy had a limited range. He cannot present every type of human beings. For example, he cannot present a very clever type of intellectual person ; he cannot present an aristocrat from high society. People from these spheres do not interest him. He is interested in rustic life and in the tragedy of the simple and the poor. But within these limitations, Hardy has created some of the masterpiece characters in English fiction. David Cecil, a

noted Hardy critic, very truly points out, "But within this limited range he works such a magic as to create an impersonal majesty of a representative of all mankind. Giles stands for all faithful lovers. Tess for all betrayed women, Eustacia for all passionate spirits."

In fact as Hardy's concept of social life was different from other novelists, so was his nature of characterization. For him social life does not exist, what actually exists is the background of Wessex country side: it is this background or environments that shapes the destinies of its inhabitants, not their own intentions and actions. So he has no need to display the human beings to individualize them in their manners and behaviours, to differentiate them from one another. This is why all persons of his novels can be grouped into a few categories. So we can fit any of his hero or heroine in the place of other. The heroes, heroines, villains, the country peasants, craftsmen of one novel generally resemble with their correspondings in the other novels. They are counterparts not only in tempraments, motives and interests, but they have also fears and anxieties of similar nature. And in their response or concern over such things as weather, the seasons, the vicissitudes of nature are also similar. They response to the deep-rooted passions, above all sexual love.

The heroes and heroines of Hardy do not care much for money or immediate self preservation. The chief factor in their struggle is love, to love some one and to succeed or suffer in it. Love gives meaning to their existence. The via media, to being, for men and women in Hardy's eyes, is love and love alone. Having achieved and accomplished love, then the man passes into the unknown ; he has become himself and his tale is told. The tale is about becoming complete, or about the failure to become complete. The love and marriage are at the centre of Hardy's novels. Love always instinctive, emotional, of a man for a woman or vice versa. The clash comes about when the partners in the love-affairs behave differently and according to their own ideas ; and the challenge thus produced becomes tragedy. He treats love as a passion, as long as, it remains in the

blood, things assume romantic perspective. But once this desire is realize that romantic charm tends to fade away. Clym is typical example of this anti-climax.

Another thing about Hardy's characters is that they are temperamentally queer. They do thing which the normal run of humanity will not. They revolt against established values, authority or convention. And in this behaviour they are unexpected and explosive. No proper preparation is given to them so that their revolt against convention may become rational and convincing. They decide and act, all within a moment. Hardy's characters are people, each with a real, vital potential self, and this self suddenly bursts the shell of manner and convention and commonplace opinion and act independently and perhaps absurdly. And it is in the revolt against the climate of commonplace opinion that the tragedy usually develops.

Though the characters—i.e., heroes and heroines—afterwards try to bring about re-adjustment with the circumstances, the balance once disturbed leaves no room for them but to abandon themselves to the consequences. In this abandonment, which is partly heroic and partly deterministic the basis of Hardy's tragic vision generally lies.

Though the heroes and heroines do not care for material success, or social prestige, yet they do care for the community and they cannot free themselve from this responsibility. They are lost when they leave community. The self-preservation scheme in this sense thwarts them and frustrates their ambitions. In their isolation they die ultimately of fear, or of self-exaustion, or of exposure to attack from all sides.

This is why tragedy of Hardy is always tragedy of those who died in the wilderness, where they had escaped for free action (Eustacia and her lover) after having left the comparative imprisonment of the established conventions. This theme novel after novel remains quiet within the conventions, and if you are conforming you are, safe and happy in the long run ; or on the other hand be passionate individual, wilful, and you will find the security of the conventions, a prison ;

you will escape and you will die, either of your own lack of strength to bear the isolation or by direct revenge from the community (for being an outcast), or from both. This is the tragedy and only this. Thus the conflict is between institutionalism and individualism, between the acceptance of communal life and the rejection of it. The choice is there. Being a member of the community man must in no way more to disintegrate the community morally or otherwise. By doing this he will remain safe. Or to feel the conventions of society as an impediment in the way of the fulfilment of his individual caprice ; this attitude of mind will lead him to break the bounds of conventionality and hence court death in his isolation.

There is a comic element in the tragedies also but it serves only as a chorus of the drama. His main characters are tragic ; others are part of a comedy. To say that Hardy is only interested in the tragic characters would be untrue. The zest of his rustic comedy alone is enough to disprove that. And it may be said that Hardy is less absorbed in his tragic characters than in the grim necessity behind them ; interested more in the deterministic pattern than in the characters. But their misfortune is a mark of pre-eminance. In Hardy's novel, the elected souls are sealed for calamity.

In the larger sense of the world Hardy was essentially a Romantic. The fate of the individual in the universe, the war of his emotion with circumstances and the conventions of the many are the theme of his novels. And it may seem that he was nowhere more romantic than when he was pessimist. He is creator of the metaphysical novels. The form of a metaphysical art develops in his mind. Hardy's novels are metaphysical in their establishing the relationship of man and destiny. A spirit in torment, a vast perpective, confrontation of the individual with destiny, the place of a human nature in the pattern of social behaviour, a keen concern into the deeper analysis of the human predicament in its essential feature—these make Hardy's works metaphysical. Dramatization,— first action then speech but the inner side is left for imagination.

Hardy penetrates deep into the human hearts. Each of his novels is a "soul's tragedy". Consider the tragedy of Tess. The tragedy lies not in herdesertion, nor in her struggle for bread, nor in her frightful death.. It lies in her sin, in her bewilderment at Clare's behaviour. In other words Hardy presents the conflict, the passion and ideas that exit within the heart of his characters. This type of character presentation is known as 'Characterization from within'. As against this method, there is 'Characterization from without', where the novelist tells us all about the outward features of a character —his nose, his height, his way of speech, his clothes and so on. Hardy combines both these methods but he places greater emphasis on 'characterization from within'.

Before Hardy the practice of almost all character-creators, whether in novel or drama, had been that the tragic hero must be a man of high rank. It was Aristotle's theory which they followed. Hardy did not follow this practice. Tess is a milkmaid ; Jude, a stone-mason ; Oak, a shepherd ; Sue, an elementary school teacher ; Henchard, a hay-trusser. Few novelists before Hardy would have the courage to credit the school teacher or a milkmaid with the possession of a soul. Hardy gave them a soul and took all pains in dissecting that soul and showed its greatness and beauty. This is Hardy's great achievement. He went down among the unnoticed, average humanity, and discovered here and there among them lives of the purest type.

Hardy studies his characters from yet another point of view. He studies their souls no doubt ; but he also studies the effects of time and circumstance upon the human form. In introducing Elizabeth Jane, he shows how poverty is beginning to make its impression on her face. Clym Yoebright's age is to be measured by the intensity of his experience ; Tess's beauty changes from place to place according to the effect of time and circumstances.

All his characters are human and probable. Hardy's persons are, in the usual phrase, very human. There are no big sinners and there are no great angels. All his characters belong to this solid earth. His characters are just such mixtures of evil with good as we find on the wider stage of

this earth. It is not sufficient that his characters should be human; they must also be what is called universal. This brings us to another point.

There are generally two kinds of characters : "types" and "individuals". In other words, a character is called a type if he is presented just as we find his counterpart in actual life. For example, a carpenter may be presented by a novelist like many other carpenters who live in this world. Now that carpenter in the novel becomes a "type" for all the carpenters in the world. At the same time a novelist can present the carpenter with certain individual qualities of his own. In that case the carpenter becomes an "individual" character, though he many represent his own class. Thus, there are two kinds of characters : "Types" and "Individuals". Hardy's major characters are all "Individuals". They behave in their own way. Tess is a milkmaid, but she is not like every other milkmaid. Here one important point is to be noted: Though his characters are individuals, yet they are universal in their appeal. It means that every observer in all ages can recognise that character inasmuch as he or she is made of that stuff which is common to all humanity. Shakespeare's characters are built on this principle; Hardy also shaped his characters on the same principle. Thus, truly speaking his characters are neither "Types" nor "Individuals", but 'Universals': each has within itself the whole of human nature.

Hardy is particularly good at drawing the character of those people whose nature is of sufficiently fine quality. He cannot present a superficial person. For Hardy to bring a character to life, it must be of a temperament to feel passionately and strongly. If it is not so, the character will never be able to realise the greatness of the problems he or she might face. For example, Hardy could not have drawn Mrs. Bennett (a character in Jane Austen's novel) for she was aware of no more important problem than that of marrying her daughter to a rich husband. Now take the case of Tess. She is a person of very fine quality. She feels and feels very strongly the weight of problems that face her. She finds herself unable for the task and the tragedy of her life takes place.

Besides his major characters, there is another group of characters in Hardy called the "Wessex chorus". In simple words these are the rustic characters : shepherds, hay-trussers, milkmaids and the like. Hardy is very good at their presentation. The fact that his great characters move in the world of the rustics gives them a touch of common humanity. In fact, without his rustic chorus, Hardy does not feel comfortable and it is also true that English literature would be much the poorer without those affectionate short sketches in which Hardy so perfectly catches the mind and manner of the Wessex countrymen.

Hardy is very successful at presenting characters of peasant-like simplicity. It means he cannot present successfully intellectuals like Angel Clare. Thus, he is great at drawing good simple people. David Cecil points out that "Grand, passionate and simple are the characters in which his creative power shines brighter."

Thus, Hardy has limitations in respect of characterization. "But when he chooses a subject fully within these limitations, when he is drawing natives of the Wessex country with deep feelings, he is simply uncomparable. The figures are made of solid flesh and blood."

CHAPTER VI

HARDY'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

To begin with Hardy is an artist and not a philosopher in the sense, say, Hegel and Kant are philosophers. And yet he has a philosophy of life. The novelist must face the problems of human character and conduct. No doubt, he approaches these problems as an observer rather than as a moralist. Yet it is almost inevitable that he should show some concern with good and bad, ugly and beautiful, moral and immoral in life. The moment he is concerned with these problems, he becomes a philosopher and his views on life may loosely be described as his philosophy of life. Hardy has deep and earnest convictions about what is good and what is bad in human life. A definite sense of values is clear almost throughout his work. Hardy himself denied many a time that he was advancing any general theory of things. He disliked the word 'Philosophy' used for his views ; 'impression' is his own favourite term for whatever sense of life his novels conveyed. In the general preface to "Tess", he says : "Let me repeat that a novel is an impression, not an argument." In spite of this statement by Hardy the fact remains that he has a philosophy of life. It is no injustice to him to call his views on life in a general way as his philosophy of life.

Then the question is : what is his philosophy of life ? Unfortunately, there seems to be much misunderstanding regarding this, both among his critics and admirers. Very often it is conveniently said that he is a pessimist, that he presents a tragic view of life where there is no hope for mankind. A. G. Gardiner, the noted essayist and critic, said : "But the pilgrimage of Thomas Hardy has led us ever into deeper shadow. The journey we began with those jolly carol-singers under the greenwood tree has ended in this

hopeless misery of Jude". In other words, A. G. Gardiner suggests that Hardy leads us from pessimism to pessimism. Similarly Baker believes that Hardy's philosophy of life is pessimistic. According to him "Hardy had a grudge against the universe which he could not throw off, a feeling of resentment at injustices and wanton cruelty which must have some objects on which to wreak itself. Assuredly, some power that hated good must be in the saddle thwarting every attempt of man to circumvent his fate. As seen by him it is a tragic theme." Thus, critic after critic has maintained that his philosophy of life is full of pessimism.

To prove their point further the critics point out that such a philosophy of life was the result of Hardy's environments and the times in which he was living. He had a tender heart, unusually responsive to spectacle of suffering. As a little boy, he even hated seeing the boughs lopped off the trees. David Cecil writes, "By the time he was fifteen a shadow had already fallen across his vision of life. He tells us he remembers lying back in the Sun and wishing that he should not grow up. Since the world he looked at seemed so full of pain and disappointment, then he argued, pain and disappointment were outstanding characteristics of human existence". The same critic further suggestes that this melancholy view of Hardy was increased by the age in which he lived. It was a disturbing age for a sensitive mind ; for it was an age of transition. Agriculture had suffered a great setback ; the population was shifting. Along with this break-up of social and economic structure there was a "disintegration of ideas". Because of science and the Darwinian theory of evolution, the old faith in religion was disappearing. An average person, under these circumstances, saw himself swept from darkness to darkness. Life seemed to him precarious. Thus, it is maintained by these critics that Hardy's pessimistic view of life was determined by two factors in particular : (1) His sensitive and speculative temperament and (2) The age in which he lived.

So far this is one side of Hardy's philosophy of life. To say that he was a pessimist, and end up the case there and say no more, is to do injustice to Hardy, the man and artist.

Even Hardy did not deny the element of pessimism in his outlook. He admitted that his was a nature that became vocal in the presence of tragedy rather than comedy. He found, he said, a special interest in "the failure of things to be what they were meant to be". But he grew a little tired of having the name pessimist used for him time and again. Sometimes he would retort that to object to a writer being a pessimist was to wish him to close his eyes to human ills. Later, he rather preferred the designation of "meliorist". "What are my books but one plea against man's inhumanity to man, woman, and the lower animals.........whatever may be the inherent good or evil of life, it is certain that man makes it much worse than it need be." These are Hardy's own words. He asserted that he "is distinctly meliorist". A meliorist is one who believes in the doctrine that world may be made better by human effort.

Now the question that we have to decide is this : Whether he was a pessimist or a meliorist. If we look at his novels one by one we find that often his tendency is to show things getting worse, specially to show a growing realization of how bad they are. In this respect some of the lines occuring in his novels and poems have been very often quoted by critics to show that he is a pessimist. One of the lines very often quoted in this connection is "that happiness was but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain." But here these critics of Hardy forget that there is a point at which pessimism becomes cynicism, that is, where a person looses all faith in life and has no good word for it except abuse. Does Hardy reach that point of cynicism ? He himself says in "Tess", "No man can be cynic and live." Pessimism with Hardy is not so unreasonable as to be on the verge of cynicism. At the end of "The Mayor of Casterbridge", Hardy takes note of a fact which, if not joyful enough to be called optimistic, had at least an anti-pessimistic tinge about it. He made Elizabeth-Jane "wonder at the persistence of the unforseen" which had brought her to "unbroken tranquility". In spite of her experience in youth that happiness was but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain, she realizes the play of the unexpected which led her to unbroken peace and happiness. This is, no doubt,

not the experience of many characters in Hardy ; Bathsheba and Oak ("Far from the Madding Crowd") are perhaps the only others who acquire this happiness. But the fact remains that Hardy recognizes the possibility of certain lives becoming happy. And if few find happiness, rather more learn wisdom from their unhappy experiences. After their sufferings, Clare and Yeobright, Tamsie and quite a few others become much wiser in life, Tess in spite of the immense sufferings, raised herself into something of infinite nobility. Thus, Hardy is not a downright possimist. A true possimist is he who, like Swift, depicts man himself as degraded, contemptible. With Hardy man is far from god-like, but still a moral being rich in interest and of high capacity. There is gloom in his world ; there is tragedy ; there is grief ; there is ironic laughter at that which makes sport of us, but one is never allowed to lose sight of the compensating facts that one can drink at the well of life's rapture, even though it be but for a moment.

Thus Hardy's philosophy of life is not completely pessimistic. It has a touch of meliorism. R.A. Scott James truly points out, "Hardy did not set out to give us a pessimistic philosophy. He did set out to show certain persons, selected because they were interested, having certain characters would behave under certain circumstances......We are not shocked by the end of his tragic novels, but on the contrary are profoundly moved by the behaviour of the persons and the sublimity of the scene. Destiny may seem pitiless and cruel, but the nobility of the characters in facing it with courage and sympathy towards one another evokes a compensating admiration......Hardy is pessimistic about the governance of the Universe, but not about human beings."

So we have seen that it is more proper to call Hardy a meliorist rather than a pessimist. Now the question is : What does he suggest by way of improvement in human life by human efforts ? Then there is the deeper question : Is there any scope for human efforts in his world ? In the world of Hardy the heroic deed is hardly possible and since this is so, the moral outlook he expresses is a good deal less emphatic than presented by, says George Eliot. His view of

life can perhaps be best summarized in one simple sentence "It is right to live naturally". "Hardy shows us how to live naturally is to live in continuity with one's own biological and geographical environment : Accepting our environment is not passive submission. Human choice can exert some influence at least on the course of things, simply working with, not against it". This is how the famous critic John Holloway interprets Hardy's philosophy of life. The people whom Hardy presents in an altogether sympathetic light are like Oak, Diggory Venn and Giles Winterbourne—all solid sterling characters completely satisfied with their position in life and at one with it. Their only misfortunes are in love, and they endure them with resignation and calm. Marty South and Elizabeth-Jane are woman rather of the same basic type. The rustic characters are the same too—goodnatured, kindly, content with their situation in life, resigned to disappointment, and never without a touch of humour. Tess's dairymaid companions at Talbothays have the same good quality, taking it for granted that Angel will not marry one of them, free of ill-feeling for Tess when he chooses her, and true to her through her later misfortunes. All these characters live in that continuity with their environment which for Hardy is the one route of a right life. "His whole concept of good and bad follows these lines and is perfectly simple. People are to be admired as they have continuity with nature more or less campletely, and those whom he stresses as on a false track in life are those who have lost it, and pursue some private self-generated dream instead. Angel Clare, Clym, Jude all pursue impossible ideals. Examples of the wrong course of life among Hardy's woman follow the same pattern". This is the impression of life that one gets from Hardy's novels. John Holloway sums up Hardy's philosophy of life in these words: "To adapt one's life to one's traditional situation is good, to uproot oneself for material ends is bad, to do so for romantic passion or an abstract ideal is if any thing worse".

Thus, Hardy has a definite view of life—a philosophy of life. This is not necessarily to say that it is true. At the same tme, it cannot be denied that in ignoring the higher life of the intellect or emotion it was not defective. Yet the fact

remains that Hardy has an unusually detailed and developed picture of what the world is like, and how the human beings are placed in it, and how by consequence they ought to live.

———

CHAPTER VII

HARDY'S TREATMENT OF NATURE

If in the field of poetry Wordsworth is the supreme nature poet, in fiction Hardy is the greatest. His novels are set in nature. The noted Hardy critic, Duffin, beautifully says, "If word-pictures could be hung on walls, a great gallery could be filled with Hardy's nature pieces." The famous ninteenth century poet and critic Matthew Arnold said of Wordsworth that to read one of his longer poems was like a day spent in the country, and the same could be said for the Wessex novels. As one reads them, one feels that one is spending the time in the Wessex country-side. All the green life beneath the sky of South England lives in his pages. If Wordsworth's Lucy was formed by the good influence of nature, Tess developed in the open air life at the dairy farm. No one can deny that the love of Tess and Angel Clare becomes more beautiful because of its environment of green pastures.

Hardy's love of nature is clear from the title of such novels as "The Woodlanders", "Under the Greenwood Tree", "Far From the Madding Crowd". These titles indicate the nature-loving aspect of Hardy's character. In fact, it is one of the major contributions of Hardy to the English novel when he introduced Nature so closely in his novels. In his hands, nature becomes almost a character. It dominates the plots and determines the character. It has life ; it feels, it speaks; it slays. Take for example, the case of Egdon Heath. Egdon Heath has got an almost human existence. Without doubt it lives. Clym is indeed the product of Egdon and without Egdon his very life would have been different. Even before Hardy, many novelists had treated nature in their novels. But nature in their hands was merely a piece of decoration. In other words, nature in the novels of Hardy's predecessors was only a background against which

the drama of human life took place. In their novels nature never entered the lives of the characters. It never became a living presence. It remained a background, a backcloth. Wordsworth had made nature a living presence in poetry; Hardy made it a living presence in fiction. Thus the first important thing about Hardy's treatment of nature is that nature in his novels is as much a character as any other human being.

The next important point about Hardy's treatment of nature is that the description of nature is not impersonal. It is not the description of a biologist who would describe nature from outside. In a majority of cases of the natural scenery shown to us at any point in a story will be found to have an emotional connection with the events happening at that moment. For example, when Clare got up in the morning after having decided to desert Tess, he finds the morning coloured almost with the same intentions :

> "Clare arose in the light of a dawn that was a shy and furtive as though associated with crime."

and yet another quotation will prove it how nature has an emotional connection with the events happening at the moment :

> "Amid the oozing fatness and warm ferments of the Froom Vale, at a season when the rush of juices could almost be heard below the hiss of fertilization, it was impossible that the most fanciful love should not grow passionate. The ready bosoms existing there were impregnated by their surroundings.........
>
> July passed over their heads, and the Thermidorean weather which came in its wake seemed an effort on the part of Nature to match the state of hearts at Talbothay's Dairy."

As a matter of fact, Hardy's landscape is much more ready to show sympathy with people in distress than with the happy ones. When Poorgrass is taking Fanny's body in the waggon to the burialground, thick fog comes on, and the trees, after standing a while in an attitude of intentness, began to drop water hollowly upon Fanny's coffin. Thus,

the point to be noted is that Hardy's nature description seldom has the 'impersonalness of the camera'. It, however, does not mean that Hardy cannot describe nature objectively. His descriptions are accurate and sometimes objective ; but the point is that his descriptions are mostly surcharged with emotions and feelings.

Hardy is a minute and accurate observer of nature. He is highly sensitive to external impressions in nature. An average intelligent observer notes small things and forgets most of them. But an artist of Hardy's power not only takes up minute details and changes in the world around him, but also links them up with human personality in a remarkable manner. He is sensitive to almost everything in nature. His ears are open to every sound. He sees, and makes us see, every delicate shade of colour, and he constantly creates the illusion in the readers' mind that he is in the actual spot described. We can see the dust rising up from the hot roadway, hear the different sounds of rain as it falls on different crops. We can also note the twisting and turning of leaves in a breeze. Thus, the point to be noted is that in his treatment of nature Hardy is a very careful and accurate observer of the natural phenomena.

Yet another point about Hardy's treatment of nature is that he takes a special note of the animals living in the lap of nature. He simply cannot mention an animal without showing his intense personal sympathy with it. Frost comes suddenly down on Norcombe Hill, and his first thought is that "Many a small bird went supperless to bed that night". What a quality of sympathy is shown in the way he tells how, as the frost came on, 'Many a small bird went to bed supperless that night among the bare boughs', or now, with the coming of spring 'Birds began not to mind getting wet'. Thus, Hardy is deeply in love with the lower animals in nature.

Hardy also notes the effect of weather and time on his characters. The very mood of nature seems to affect the mood and feelings of the characters. The strange, unearthly feeling of early morning to Clare when he is near Tess, the tense, boding atmosphere while Gabriel Oak is working to

save Bathsheba's ricks from coming storm—these and many more scenes show natural aspects working on the mood of the character and through him or her, on that of the reader.

Hardy presents nature in almost all aspects. Sometimes, we get nature red in tooth and claw, that is nature in its fierce aspects. We also get very beautiful and delicate descriptions of nature from him. The famous critic, Cazamian, says : "Hardy has most lovingly described the elementary, grand, and sad aspects of nature. The land which appeals to him most is that which is freest from human dwellings ; he loves the sea, but does not often describe it not finding himself sufficiently familiar with its moods ; he loves more to paint the woods, where the seasons go through the infinitely varied circle of rich pastures, the sober hills of his native district; and the gloomy vastness of the moor in which every living being vanishes as if swallowed up in the depth of the century." But one thing, however, is to be noted. Hardy's attitude to nature is not by any means that of Wordsworth. Wordsworth always presented nature as a healing power, as a constant source of joy and as a moral teacher. Hardy is not so definite of the good intentions of nature. In his pages, nature is very often indfferent. It has its own ways. It does not care very much for human happiness. At the most it shows sympathy with people in difficulties than with happy ones. But at the same time, it will be wrong to say that Hardy always saw nature 'red in tooth and claw', that is in its fierce aspects. This point can be convincingly proved if a reader of Hardy reads carefully the descriptions of nature at the Talbothay's dairy farm where Tess carried on her love with Clare. At the dairy farm, nature is shown very often as grand, genial, and kind. Thus the point to be noted is that Hardy has described nature in almost in all aspects—elementary, grand, lovely, and sad. In conclusion, we can say that nature, for the first time played a larger part in his books than in those of any other English novelist, It is not just the background in his drama, but a leading character in it. His most living characters, are always natives of the country-side. Farmers and shepherds, thatchers and hedgers, they, most of them, never go beyond its borders. A few, indeed, go off as soldiers or sailors but

out of their original environment they are aliens. In the words of the famous critic, Duffin, "The landscape background of the novels, and the working life, so faithfully painted in, of men and animals in the country, are of unique richness and importance and constitute perhaps one-half of the permanent value of Hardy's work."

CHAPTER VIII

THE ROLE OF FATE AND CHANCE IN HARDY'S NOVELS

In Hardy's novels, fate plays a very important part. Sometimes it appears that human beings in his world have no individual life of their own; they are controlled by fate. Not only this, it appears they are controlled by fate from outside as well as from within. In other words it means that fate interferes in the lives of human beings through some external happenings. For example, Newson in "The Mayor of Casterbridge" appears just at the time when Henchard most needed the help of his step-daughter Elizabeth Jane. Newson claims back Elizabeth Jane and Henchard feels greater loneliness, which led him to desperate acts. In this case, fate works from outside. But fate, in Hardy, works from within the characters as well. It is just a matter of fate that Jude with his intellectual aspirations also had a high degree of sensuousness, which led to his misfortune. Thus, to repeat it once again, one of the strongest impressions that one gets on reading Hardy's novels is that fate is all-powerful and it works both from within the characters and outside of them. The noted Hardy critic, David Cecil says : A struggle between the man on the one hand and, on the other, an omnipotent and indifferent Fate—that is Hardy's interpretation of the human situation."

Thus, there is a conflict in the novels of Hardy but it is not a conflict between one man and another, or between man and an institution. In Hardy's books, man has to fight against impersonal forces, called in a general way, Fate. Henchard is full of hatred for Farfrae ; Bathsheba considers Troy as the main cause of her unhappiness. But actually, those whom they think their enemies are as much as them-

selves puppets in the hands of Fate. Fate (not they) is ultimately responsible for their quarrels. Unless they were destined to do so, they would not be in conflict with each other and indeed it is significant that Hardy—as a rule—emphasizes the fact that even those characters the world would call wicked are so much the creatures of circumstances that they are far more to be pitied than to be blamed. Tess is a noble girl. She has no wish to make other people unhappy ; only, forced by the pressure of her nature, she throws aside anything that checks her way. Fate is her enemy, as it is that of her rivals. "Justice was done and the President of the Immortals had ended his sport with Tess"—in that sentence we have the very essence of Thomas Hardy's idea of human life. Man is a creature in the hands of an impenetrable fate, cold and passionless and indiscriminating. In his own words it is :

"The purposive, unmotived, dominant Thing
Which sways in brooding dark their wayfaring."

In the hands of this "unmotived dominant Thing" human beings are helpless :

'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods ;
They kill us for their sport.'

Hardy presents this blind indifferent fate in various forms. Sometimes it appears as a natural force. Henchard's plans for making himself rich are brought to nothing by a bad harvest ; the weather takes the part of Fate here. Sometimes, Fate appears as some inner weakness of character. Angel Clare's life becomes unhappy because from the very birth he did not have enough of the animal in him. But Fate in the novels of Hardy generally appears in two forms : (1) as chance, and (2) as love. Of these, chance is the most common. In no other novels does chance play such an important part in the lives of people. For example, at the very beginning of her life as a young girl Tess meets the wrong man. A few days before she marries Angel Clare, she pushes under the door of his bed-room, a written letter full of compassion, which slips under the carpet where it remains until found by Tess on the wedding morning. On a Sunday, Tess walks fifteen miles

to the house of the elder Clare to seek protection ; there is no answer to her ring at the door, for the family is at Church. Just a matter of chance indeed. At just the wrong time she now meets Alec once more. A letter she sends to Angel in Brazil is delayed, and he reaches home a few days late. On all these occasions Fate in the form of chance stood in the way of Tess's happiness. Examples of this type can be given from almost all novels of Hardy.

Thus, it is clear that in no other novels do chance and fate play such an important part on the course of events. Hardy has been blamed for this. And no doubt, he does sometimes overdoes it. But to condemn his use of chance altogether is to misunderstand his view of life. When we read his novels, we are witnessing a battle between man and Destiny. Destiny is an unknown force ; we do not know its nature or its intentions. And we cannot, therefore, predict what it will do. As a result of this, its acts always show themselves in the form of unexpected blows of chance. The world of his novels is by no means a world in which all things can be reduced to obvious law and explained by common sense. The strange, the unexpected, the inexplicable occur everywhere and always. The method is quite deliberately used, and is well-rooted in Hardy's philosophy. The philosophy of the practice in Hardy's own words can be explained :

> "Strange conjunctions of circumstances, particularly those of a trivial everyday kind, are so frequent in an ordinary life that we grow used to their accountableness..."

In simple words, Hardy makes it clear that the chance happenings that take place in his novels also take place in life. He believes that there are indeed more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in man's philosophy.

From the above account, it is clear that fate plays a dominant part in the novels of Hardy. Quite often Fate acts on the lives of the characters in the form of chance happenings. It is no use blaming Hardy for the excessive use of Fate and chance in his novels for by the very nature of his

theme they are essential in his world. In the world of Hardy, the struggle is between man and Destiny, and the latter is more powerful than the former. Moreover, Destiny is an unknown force ; we do not know how it acts. As a result of this it shows itself in the form of unexpected blows of chance. Thus, considering his philosophy of life, Hardy is justified in the use of Fate and chance to a great extent in his novels.

CHAPTER IX

HARDY'S PESSIMISM

Duffin in his book "Thomas Hardy" writes: "Your pessimist is born, not made", and then adds that his "state of mind is capable of being accentuated by external happenings." In simple words, it means that a pessimist is a person who is born with a certain temperament, a certain attitude of mind, and this attitude is further influenced by external happenings. If we study Hardy's life closely, it appears that he was born with a temperament which understood the melancholy aspects of things better than the comic. In this connection, the famous critic Baker points out, "According to all accounts of Hardy's early life, his was an extremely sensitive temperament, rather given to melancholy, easily moved to tears, fond of solitude, though by no means inaccessible to good fellowship, and enjoying a good laugh as much as any one: specially if the joke was of a profane or sardonic character. All his life he had a weakness for gruesome incidents, grim legends, creepy stories, ghosts, murders, suicides, and the like. He never seems to have missed a funeral at least of any one distinguished or of his own kin and is full of reminiscences of those melancholy festivals." From this account it is a clear that Hardy's mind was given to the thinking of melancholy episodes.

This habit of mind was further intensified by Hardy's environments and the times in which he lived. There was plenty of tragedy in the lives of the Wessex labourers, with their poverty and their passions. Dependent and ignorant, they had to suffer in many ways from the social system and the changing weather. At every moment of their existence, the people among whom Hardy was brought up were made conscious of men's helplessness in the face of circumstances. Hardy was the man to understand the tragedy present in

such a life. He had a tender heart, usually responsive to the sight of suffering. Thus, his own surroundings made him see the tragedy present in life. He could never forget the unhappy labourer or the dissatisfied country-girl. Besides these native surroundings, Hardy lived in an age of transition. It was a disturbing age for a sensitive mind. The industrial revolution had begun and was destroying the old agricultural England. Population was shifting from the country to the town. Thus, the old social and economic structure was disintegrating. There was also a disintegration of ideas. The old faith of the people was disturbed and very much shaken by the criticism of the Bible and the Darvinian theory of evolution. People were feeling uncertain about Christianity. Thus, there was an atmosphere of doubt instead of faith. Hardy shared this atmosphere of doubt. As a countryman, he belonged to the world that was passing.

Thus, both Hardy's temperament and the external happenings made Hardy see at the tragic aspect of life. At one place in 'Tess' he writes :

> "Sheer experience had already taught her that in some circumstances, there was one thing better than to lead a good life and that was to be saved from leading any life whatever."

This conclusion is arrived at by a very young girl who was hardly twenty-one years old. But Hardy was compelled to show the balance of things that his artist's eyes compelled him to see. Incidental observations are almost always made through those temperamental dark glasses. But the general picture that we get from Hardy's novels is that of a realist. He grew indeed a little tired of having the name pessimist used for him with abusive intentions. He would say, and very rightly, that to object to a writer being a pessimist was to wish him to close his eyes to human ills. He said it was his aim to present a view of things that harmonized with experience, but he admitted that his was a nature that became vocal in the presence of tragedy rather than comedy. He once said, "I discovered several years ago that I was living in a world where nothing bears out its promise in practice."

So he gave us, in the Wessex novels, *La Tragedie Humaine* (that is, the tragedy of Human life). Thus, it cannot be denied that there is pessimism in the outlook of Hardy. And yet it should be kept in mind that Hardy is not a downright pessimist.

A confirmed pessimist is one who holds human beings in contempt and who has no faith in human life itself. That famous 18th century writer, Swift, is a downright pessimist. He considered human beings no better than animals. With Hardy, it is not so. There is tragedy in the world of Hardy ; there is pain and suffering ; there is gloom and darkness ; there are many lovely persons whose hearts are broken and whose happiness is taken away from them. And yet Hardy does not despise man. He seems to have some grudge against the universe but none against its inhabitants. He has a feeling of anger at injustices and purposeless cruelty. He feels perplexed at unnecessary suffering in human life. He felt that human beings were in the grip of some merciless Fate. In the words of his own poem he saw man under the control of some "Loveless, Hateless, Immanence" that is some Destiny which had no regard to human welfare and happiness. Commenting on this aspect of Hardy's pessimism, Scott-James writes : "Hardy is pessimistic about the governance of the universe, but not about human beings."

From this discussion one point becomes clear : Hardy is sensitive to the unhappy situation of man in this world. Most of his greater novels are tragedies, tragedies on the grand scale. They are all of them love-stories but the men and women who suffer this passion, individual as they are, become also representatives of the human race. We are to see them through Hardy's eyes, against a vast background of nature, the victim of the President of the Immortals. The sensitive souls in his pages express, 'The ache of modernism' ; Clym Yeobright's face reflected 'the view of life as a thing to be put up with, replacing that zest for existence which was so intense in early civilizations.' Even as a boy Jude showed that he was the sort of man who was born to ache. As a man he was a victim of the medern vice of unrest. Upon the episode of Little Father Time the doctor comments, "It

is the beginning of the coming universal wish not to live." In these tragic books we have a sharp criticism of modern life. Clym saw 'the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain'. Tess supposed that 'we lived on a star that is a blighted one.'

But in spite of all this, in spite of this temperament for the seamy side of life, we are not shocked by the end of his tragic novels. On the other hand, we are probably moved by the behaviour of the persons and the sublimity of the scene. Destiny may seem pitiless and cruel, but the nobility of the characters in facing it with courage and sympathy towards one-another evokes a compensating admiration. In "The Woodlanders", the devotion of Giles to Grace is unfailing. At the end, the tragedy of his death becomes noble by the triumph of the sacrifice of himself for her sake. The tragedy is almost beautified by the unfailing and apparently unrewarded love of Marty South. Thus, Hardy did not set out to give us a world of total pessimism. He tried to show how certain persons, selected because they were interesting having certain characters, would behave under certain circumstances. But never does he look down upon man as a degraded thing. The Christian virtues—fidelity, compassion, humility—were the most beautiful to him. And the same honesty that compelled him to accept the grim view of life which his reason told him was the true one, kept him also faithful to what his instinct told him was the highest ideal of virtue. These virtues might not be of any use in this universe, they might be defeated. All the same, he believed in them. "He was one of the most Christian spirits that ever lived. Hardy's very pessimism is of a kind only possible to one indissolubly wedded to Christian standards of value. But born in an age of transition he could not believe in the Christian hope." And yet the final turth remains that Hardy's pessimism is not oppressive, it is not the outcome of a soul who rebelled against life. One hundred and six famous writers and friends signed an address to Hardy on his 81st birthday in which they wrote about this final truth :

"In your novels and poems you have given us a

> tragic vision of life which is informed by your knowledge of character and relieved by the charity of your humour, and sweetened by your sympathy with human suffering and endurance. We have learned from you that the proud heart can subdue the hardest fate even in submitting to it...In all that you have written you have shown the spirit of man, nourished by tradition and sustained by pride, persisting through defeat."

Thus, Hardy is a pessimist with a difference.

CHAPTER X

HARDY'S HUMOUR

Hardy is not a humorist in any deep sense. He is not a humorist in the same way as Lamb, Dickens, P. G. Woodhouse, are humorists. He is quick to see the humour of things, and had an ear for a good story. The diaries that he maintained record many such stories. But his mind was not humorously built. Humour did not enter into the substance or method of his thought just as it entered into that of Dickens.

Almost all the humour in the Wessex novels that is worth-preserving is rustic humour. In other words, the peasants, hay-trussers, milkmaids and the like, known as the rustics, are the main source of humour in Hardy. It is the humour caught up with joy from the lips of the villagers themselves, and is presented in a very pure form. Hardy makes Angel Clare discover, with a surprise he himself can never have known, the variety, the interest and delight that lay behind, "The pitiable dumy known as Hodge." This element of humour was discovered by Clare when he listened to the talk of his dairy companion about one unfaithful character, Hodge. Hardy's minor characters, as against his major characters, are simple country-folk who are full of this humour. These minor characters are sometimes called the chorus. The function of a chorus is to give information which is not known to a reader or the spectator. Writing about Hardy's humour, Lord David Cecil says, "This chorus provides also the chief occasion for Hardy's humour. Humour is not the quality that one might expect to find in him so grand and so gloomy as he is. But it is there all right. It is rustic, it is elemental, it is grotesque, it is gothic, it is traditional." This rustic humour in Hardy descends directly from Shakespeare and the Elizabethans.

We get very rich humour from the minor characters of Shakespeare ; even in his tragedies it exists. "Hamlet" is a big tragedy but the grave-diggers become the source of humour in the presence of tragic happenings. Similarly, in Hardy in the very presence of grand tragedy these rustics provide us humour free from all malice.

The quality of the rustic humour grew richer, if not finer, as the novels went on. One can always derive fun from the scene at Stephen's home-coming in "A Pair of Blue Eyes". But the deepest humour of Hardy is to be found in those scenes where the rustic groups exercise the chorus function. The quality of their commentary is full of wit and humour. In their eagerness these rustic characters sometimes act in an advisory capacity, and they become funny. Sometimes they give us a lot of information, specially of the family history of the main characters, and they do it in a very fine manner. When Bathsheba decides to do without a bailiff there is old shaking of heads :

"A headstrong maid, that's what she is and won't listen to know advice at all. Pride and vanity have ruined many a cobbler's dog. Dear, dear, when I thank o' it,

I sorrows like a man in travel."

In such a funny manner, these rustic characters comment on Bathsheba's decision. To give one more example. In "Tess", the dairy companions discuss one morning the question of ghost. During the discussion Tess said. "I don't know about ghosts ; but I do know that our souls can be made to go outside our bodies when we are alive." Tess continued, "A very easy way to feel them go is to lie on the grass at night and look straight up at some big bright star ; and by fixing your mind upon it, you will soon find that you are hundreds and hundreds of miles away from your body, which you do not seem to want at all". Thereupon, the dairyman remarked :

> "To think of the miles I have wamped on starlight nights these last thirty year, courting, or trading, or for doctors, for nurse, and yet never had the least notion of that till now, or felt my soul rise so much as an inch above my shirt collar."

Now this is pure humour free from any feeling of satire. Commenting on this Abercrombie says, "In several scenes the elemental comedy of these rustic immortals is without doubt Shakespearean in degree as well as in kind."

If not involved with these rustic characters, the quality of Hardy's humour changes. It usually takes the form of irony. Hardy is too much of a realist to take pleasure in making fun of serious things. His satire is generally too bitter to be called humorous, but here and there a gentler spirit of mockery raises a smile.

Then the fact remains that the main theme of his humour is the rustic comedy. "We are made to laugh at the various funny aspects of village life. We laugh at old grand fathers, henpecked husbands, simpletons, and the gap between the facts of life and the countrymen's ignorant comment on them". Hardy's sense of the irony of human destiny enables him to get a good deal of hearty fun out of coffins and funerals.

Thus, the source of Hardy's homour is very limited. But within this limited field he has the capacity to give us humour at its best.

CHAPTER XI

HARDY'S WESSEX

Hardy belonged to Dorchester and he wrote of that South Western part of England which has come to be known through him as Wessex. As a result of his very accurate and loving presentation of the area and its details he has succeeded in building up, through his novels, an immortal region. In all his novels the scenes and characters are taken from the Wessex country-side. His father was a builder, his mother the daughter of a Dorsetshire small landowner. Thus his ancestory inspired great interest in him for the old English Kingdom of Wessex. Hardy's Wessex is much more than a scenic setting for his stories and poems. It almost becomes a character brooding constantly above his works. He points out again and again the unchanging aspect of large areas of Wessex. Egdon Heath is "a face upon which time makes but little impression" . . . . "a tract of country unaltered from that sinister condition which made Caesar anxious every year to get clear of his blooms." Thus, the point to be noted is that Wessex is very much a character in the novels of Hardy ; further, it continues to move in time from generation to generation without much change.

Just as in the poetry of Wordsworth, Lucy is influenced by Nature, characters in the novels of Hardy are made what they are because of Wessex. But there is one difference. In Wordsworth the influence is always good ; in Hardy it is sometimes good, sometimes bad, and very often Nature is indifferent to human welfare. But nonetheless, the influence of Wessex is there in the life of each and every character who lives on its surface. All the inhabitants whether intellectuals or rustics, are touched by a 'lumber of superstitions, folk-lore, dialect and orally transmitted ballads'. These characters in Hardy are the products of Wessex, and they feel very

much out of place when they move out of it. Grace Melbury turns upon her father with the cry, "I wish you had never, never thought of educating me. I wish I had worked in the woods like Marty South. I hate genteel life . . . . cultivation has only brought inconveniences and troubles". Thus the changeless spirit of Wessex speaks in her. Similarly, all those characters who run away or revolt against the traditions and culture of Wessex, find life a tale of constant unhappiness. Characters like Oak and Diggory Venn live in harmony with Wessex and find life a source of constant happiness. In this way it is clear that Wessex is not merely a background in Hardy but a living presence which exercises a very powerful influence on the characters who live on its surface.

In describing Wessex, Hardy is at his best. Perhaps in this respect he is the greatest name in the English novel. Never has a region been so celebrated as in his books. And within that world he has created hundreds of characters who live very dearly in our memory for generation after generation. The people of Wessex dance and sing, eat and drink, work and make love; and on some occasions they do more dangerous things, such as murder and adultery, and moral cheating. Their clothes and manners are becoming somewhat old-fashioned now but the people themselves are still warm-blooded.

The one important point which is to be noted here is that Hardy could describe Wessex so well only because he himself was the product of it. He felt one with it. The famous critic, Church says, "He is part of his own Wessex world, one with its people, a child of his country-side. When he leaves it he is quaint and mannered like a farmer come to town in a stiff suit; or perhaps an old country doctor. But back in his own world, all his sagacity, his scholarship, his first-hand knowledge of place and people, of nature and the ineffable overspirit of time and place, return to inform his art." In other words Hardy's genius does not work successfully when he is not writing about Wessex and its people. He failed miserably whenever he tried to describe the high and fashionable society. Mrs. F. E. Hardy records, "that residence in or near a city tended to force mechanical and

ordinary productions from his pen, concerning ordinary social life and habits." From this first-hand account it is clear that Hardy had made himself one with the Wessex country-side, and because of this identity with the Wessex country-side he could describe it so well. He has printed himself so completely upon the Wessex country, has presented so deeply to its heart, that it seems to speak in his own accents. In the words of A. G. Gardiner, 'It is a world whose realities have become charged with the magic of his dreams." At its best, as in "The Woodlanders", one of the most beautiful novles in the English language, Wessex country-side is described in a remarkable manner. Within the pages of this book, we smell and hear, touch and see almost everything that lives there. After sometime, we realise that all this wonderful experience is created by the poet by means of words. By his remarkable response to Wessex country-side he brings us in close touch with its woodlands, soils and waters, and the folk who live there.

The region of Wessex cannot be accurately described geographically. In a general way it can be said that it consists of Berkshire, Wiltshire. Somerset; Hampshire, Dorset and Devon. It must not be supposed that Hardy lived in this region which could not be compared in beauty with any other. Or it is equally wrong to feel that such spots as Wessex exist nowhere else. What is true is that all these landscapes of meadow and wood, all these pictures of villages and rustic scenes could be seen and presented by Hardy alone. No other eye could see them; no other pen could describe them. This wonderful observer discovered things that did not exist for the ordinary eye. It is enough to travel in Wessex and find out how Hardy has touched everything there with poetry and beauty. Here it should, however, be noted that Hardy could do this type of job only as a result of a very high degree of sincerity, and a very strong sense of attachment with Wessex countryside." What Hardy did for his little country was a work of piety, emotion and love no less than of genius."

In his description of Wessex, Hardy gives us almost all the sensory details, that is all that which is felt by the senses. As one reads Hardy's novels, one after another, one can

smell the scent of Orchard in October, the creamy odour around the apple trees, the fragrance of cut hay on the banks of the river in June. With a record of sensory observations of astonishing scope, Hardy can interpret even the whispering of the wind upon every type of leaf. Thus all those things which would have been ignored by our sense of smell or by our eyes or by our ears have been preserved by him from loss. As a result of his sharp interpretation every object in Wessex stood before him in clear outline. Many things have changed in and around Wessex since he described it. But the memory of it is fixed for posterity as long as English fiction continues to be read. R. A. Scott-James very truly points out, "The Wessex described by Hardy lives in the imagination more distinctly than any other region described by an English writer, perhaps any writer." It is indeed so. Scott in his novels has described the Scottish country ; Wordsworth has made the Lake districts immortals in his poems. But they do not stick out in the memory as sharply and distinctly as Hardy's Wessex.

In his description of Wessex, Hardy has not only described the external happenings but also the internal changes. In Hardy's time, the old Wessex of settled peasant community with their own customs was breaking up. In describing Wessex, Hardy describes all these changes. From novel to novel he points out how modern civilization was impinging upon the old Wessex life. In this way, Hardy is the most faithful historian of Wessex. *He is, and will always be, "The Wessex novelist and poet."*

CHAPTER XII

HARDY'S RUSTIC CHARACTERS

Rustic means 'relating to the country', that is rural. Hardy's novels are full of rustic characters. These rustic characters are presented in brief outlines but collectively they form a very important aspect of Hardy's art. Without these rustic characters, the novels of Hardy would have suffered very much for the lack of country air which breathes through them.

There are three grades of characters in Hardy's novels. First, those who are protagonists of the whole human drama (A protagonist is the person who takes the leading part in a contest or plot or drama). Among these are characters like Henchard, Oak, Clym Yeobright, Tess, Grace, Giles and many others. Second, the people who are in contact with the protagonist or have some part in their affairs. These characters simply help the protagonist in one way or another; in themselves they are of small interest. Lastly, the rustic bystanders who perform two functions : (1) provide comic relief (2) act as a source of valuable information ; and in this respect they are known as rustic chorus. The word 'chorus' is taken from the Greek drama, where the function of the chorus was to give such information to the audience as was not otherwise available. Hardy's rustics quite often take upon themselves this responsibility. But in spite of this, the permanent value of Hardy's rustics is that they are the only source of humour in Hardy. In the gloomy world of Hardy they are like the rays of the sun.

Let us first of all understand the chief quality of these rustics as presented by Thomas Hardy. To begin with, these rustics are not by any means an unthinking group. They are not merely meant as stage furniture. They have a logic of their own. Then they are full of the traditions of

their class, rooted in the soil. They are as eternal as the woods and fields and heaths. Thirdly, they are quiet but deeply interested observers who see more of what is going on than the gentlefolks know. Diggory Venn, in "The Return of the Native" is a big example of this type of function performed by the rustics. He becomes a ragular spy and detective watching over Thomasin's affairs. He knows all that is happening, before and behind the scenes, and through him the reader gets a perfect understanding of the various occurrences that take place.

On the whole these lesser people are not presented in greater details ; they are not individualised, that is, none of them has as independent an existence as Jude has. Yet Hardy has drawn them very well and some of them are more loveable than the main characters themselves. Thomas Leaf and Christian Cantle, Joseph Poorgrass, William Worm, Mark Clark, Cainy Ball, Moon, Creed and Coggan, are such minor characters providing a useful comment now and then and a rich comic relief in the novel. As has been pointed out these characters are the most important source of humour in Hardy's dark and tragic world.

The second important function of these rustic characters is that of chorus. David Cecil points out, "There is one category among Hardy's characters which may be called Hardy's 'chorus characters', the groups of rustics which in his greatest works form, as it were, the chorus of the main drama. The Casterbridge gossips in "The Mayor of Casterbridge", Bathsheba's labourers in "Far From the Madding Crowd", the turf-cutters in "The Return of the Native", all act as chorus". These characters however, cannot be compared with the central figures in the drama just because they are placed in the story to perform one or two types of functions. They generally appear in a group, never separately. They are not full-length portraits. In this respect, Hardy is very much like Shakespeare. In fact he follows the same tradition as Shakespeare established. In the plays of Shakespeare we have characters like Bottom and Dogberry, the rustics who gather round Falstaff. The rustics of Hardy are the direct descendants of the Shakespearean characters. These character need not fear any comparison with their ancestors. They are

as great in their own rights as any of the classic comic character of Fielding or Goldsmith. But there is one thing about Hardy's rustic characters. Besides being a source of humour they are capable of serious emotions.

This Wessex chorus was first of all introduced in "Under the Greenwood Tree". From that novel onwards it became a necessary part of the great tragedies that Hardy wrote. In his final works, "Tess" and "Jude", these rustic characters are more or less discarded. Their disappearance is more of a loss than a gain. In the presence of these characters the protagonists of Hardy seem to move in our own world. Jude is an intellectual, Angel Clare is an idealist, Henchard is a dominant figure of great determination—and yet these characters move alongside with the rustics. "The mere presence of Mother Cusisom, Joseph Poorgrass, Old Haymass and the rest spreads an air of authenticity which radiates kindly over the awkward machinery of some of Hardy's plots and makes them move comfortably". Without these creations the main characters of Hardy would have been cut off from the roots of common life. By presenting these rustic characters Hardy brings us into the warm presence of immediate humanity. These characters have no mask and they speak out in a very natural and unaffected manner. "The fact that his mighty characters move in the world of Joseph Poorgrass and John Coggan is their strongest pledge of fidelity." Thus, these characters are necessary to set Hardy's main and serious drama in perspective with human life as a whole. The chorus is the symbol of the great majority of commonplace mortals, who go on living through their uneventful day, whatever tragedy may happen to the finer spirits placed among them. Henchard and Eustacia may love and suffer and die ; but the rustics go on. They dance at the wedding, mourn at the graveyard, and speak the epitaph over the tomb. They are eternal as the earth by which they live. Their very presence gives the reader a standard of normality by which he can judge the great heights and depths to which the main characters rise and fall. They are made out of the bed-rock of life.

In "Tess" and "Jude", Hardy almost gave up his Wessex chorus. One can understand perhaps that he wanted to

purify and simplify his style so as to concentrate completely on the great dramas he was about to undertake. The Wessex rustics were not in key with the bitterly argumentative tone he was developing. But here Hardy was mistaken. His rustic chorus had been the ballast of his ship, and she rides less steadily without it. There will always be arguments about the greatness of Hardy as a novelist, about his plots and style, about Tess's virtue and so on. But everybody will agree that English literature "would be much the poorer without those affectionate thumbnail sketches in which Hardy so perfectly catches the mind and manner of the Wessex countryman."

In conclusion, we can say that (a) in presenting the rustic characters Hardy is the greatest artist, though he is in direct line with Shakespeare. (b) These rustic characters give an air of commonplace humanity to the highly poetic world of Thomas Hardy. Their presence makes us feel that his dramas are taking place in this very world of average human beings. (c) Then these rustic characters are the source of the richest humour in Hardy. They provide much needed comic interlude in the very serious dramas of human life that Hardy presents. (d) They act as chorus. Very often they give us important information, and make the story move on from one crisis to another. (e) They are not full-length portraits ; they are merely thumbnail sketches. They hardly appear separately ; they generally exist in groups. And yet their existence in the novels of Hardy is as important as the existence of any major characters.

CHAPTER XIII

LOCAL COLOUR IN HARDY'S NOVELS

'Local Colour' is a literary expression which is used in literature in a particular sense. It means the use of regional detail to add interest to a narrative. Local colour, as the term implies, is generally not of great importance to the plot or for an understanding of the theme. It gives us full idea of locale, dress, and customs of the region. In this sense, local colour is mere decoration. When, however, description of a region becomes an integral and necessary part of the work, the emphasis on the relationship of region to the action is then known as regional literature. In other words, it is not difficult for an artist to pass from local colour to regional literature. When the details of a region become all-important, when they are not mere decorations, the treatment is known as regional literature. Hardy continually passes from local colour to regional literature. In describing Wessex, he describes all its aspects, particularly its customs, manners, dress, locale. To this extent he gives us local colour of the richest variety. But this is not all. His local colour is not merely decorative ; the very surroundings of Wessex enter into the lives of his characters. The entire region begins to influence the very course of destiny, and Hardy then becomes a regional novelist. Here, however, we are merely concerned with the element of local colour in Hardy.

Since the end of the 18th century, there had come about a distinct sense of locality in European literature. To understand a particular piece of art, once it was not necessary that we should understand the locality in detail. The fact that Milton was a Londoner does not have much effect on our appreciation of "Paradise Lost", but the fact that Hardy was a talesman of Wessex is all important for the understanding of his novels. Sir Walter Scott was the first great novelist, who

made use of this modern feeling for the character of places. In his Waverley novels he produced a body of prose fiction which is a complete picture of Scottland that he knew and loved so well. But it was left only for Hardy to make a complete and detailed study, and to produce an undying picture of the region where he was born and which he loved with a poet's passion. The creator of Tess by his profound and sympathetic understanding of the local and the individual succeeded in giving a perfect picture of locale connected with the novel. The Wessex novels of Hardy can be compared with the Waverley novels, for richness and variety, for sincerity and strength, although the two novelists differ quite a lot in their method of art and their general outlook.

Hardy's novels deal with Wessex. Every event takes place in this region. People come from outside, yet the action of the drama unfolds itself in Wessex. The Wessex of Thomas Hardy has not got very clearly defined limits. Bounded on the South by the English, Channel, it stretches as far west as Cornwall, as far north as Oxford, and as far east as Windsor. But the centre and the true home of Hardy's art is the native country of Dorset. When Hardy was a boy, he observed Dorset carefully and became one with it. It was a country chiefly agricultural in economy, where old customs still survived ; it was having some unrest as a result of the fast developing Industrial Revolution. And Hardy understood it in all its aspects as Scott knew the Border Country. In fact, he had studied it with the enthusiasm of a poet on the one hand, and with the scientific accuracy of a social historian and antquarian on the other. He knows the Wessex landscape not in a casual manner as a tourist would know it. He knows it as a farmer or labourer in the fields might know it. He knows every detail of the business of the farmer, how he dresses himself from place to place in this region, his actions, his mannerisms, his accents, his typical behaviour, his superstitions. He knows the shepherd, the woodman, the dairyman and all the rustic occupations of the Wessex country-side. He also knew the locale very well, the various hills, the heaths, the rivers and rivulets, the pastures and dairies spread all over this region.

Indeed, we should not forget that Hardy's art is mainly built as a result of his deep and sympathetic understanding of the life and character of the Wessex people, the farm-hands and servants, dairymaids, shepherds, and labourers. It is in the Wessex novels that for the first time in English literature a great author deliberately chooses English peasant types for his heroes and heroines. He has done something very great in showing how the simple obscure English village life can provide a gallery of great characters. It is a gallery that includes Gabriel Oak, Marty South, Henchard, Tess, Jude, and at the same time, Joseph Poorgrass and his many companions.

Hardy could be successful in presenting this local colour because of his very deep attachment with a country-side to which he belonged. When we read his life, we learn how he would go back to Wessex from London. His wife was fond of London and its life but Hardy could never love it. When he wrote "The Mayor of Casterbridge" he was living in the heart of Dorset, in his own home. His very presence there gave clarity and conviction to his vision. It is important to notice that all his great novels belong to periods of settled residence in Dorsetshire. Whenever he was uprooted from the surroundings of Wessex he lost his creative genius. Mrs. F. E. Hardy records, "That residence in or near a city tended to force mechanical and ordinary productions from his pen, concerning ordinary social life and habits." The result is that his world becomes limited. There is comedy in Hardy's books, and poetry and tragedy; but his comedy is limited to humours of rustic life, his poetry is the poetry of the folk-song, his tragedy is the stark and simple tragedy of the poor.

Hardy displays his unfailing sense of local colour in almost all his novels. Here is an example of the simple village-folk rooted in superstition from Tess : "Passing on to the wicket-gate he shook hands with the dairyman and his wife, and expressed his last thanks to them for their attentions; after which there was a moment of silence before they had moved off. It was interrupted by the crowing of a cock. The white one with the rose comb had come and settled on the palings in front of the house, within a few yards of them, and his

notes thrilled their ears though, dwindling away like echoes down a valley of rocks.

'Oh !' said Mrs. Crick. 'An afternoon crow !'

Two men were standing by the yard gate, holding it open.

'That's bad,' one murmured to the other, not thinking that the words could be heard by the group at the door-wicket.

The cock crew again—straight towards Clare.

'Well !' said the dairyman.

'I don't like to hear him !' said Tess to her husband. "Tell the man to drive on. Good-bye, good-bye !'

The cock crew again.

'Hoosh ! Just you be off, sir, or I'll twist your neck !' said the dairyman with some irritation, turning to the bird and driving him away. And to his wife as they went indoors : 'Now, to think o' that just to-day ! I've not heard his crow of an afternoon all the year afore."

More examples can be given to show the wealth of local colour in Hardy's novels. And yet it should not be forgotten that in spite of this regional attachment, Hardy becomes universal. David Cecil, a noted Hardy critic, writes, "For all that Hardy makes such a play with the local characteristics of his scene, yet always he penetrates beneath them to those universal facts of human existence of which this scene is only one example. In spite of the loving exactitude with which he details the characteristic features of Wessex life, he never lets us forget that this Wessex life is part of the life of the whole human race and is inextricably connected with it." Thus, the Wessex novels represent a vast human drama painted on the canvas of a small region. It is this element of universality which distinguishes the novels of Hardy from other novels of regional character and raises them to a high rank in the field of English fiction.

CHAPTER XIV

TREATMENT OF MARRIAGE AND SEX IN HARDY'S NOVELS

Hardy as a novelist is always concerned with the fundamental problems of life. Marriage and sex perhaps form the greatest problem in human life. In almost all novels of Hardy there is the question of successful or unsuccessful marriage. Sue in "Jude the Obscure" takes certain unusual steps to establish her relations with Jude even though she is already married. The result is she comes to grief. She says, "Perhaps the world is not illumined enough for such experiments as ours ? Who were we, to think we could act as pioneers." This problem of marriage is discussed in greater details in two of his novels, "Tess" and "Jude the Obscure." He bases both the novels on two social beliefs : the belief that a girl who has been raped is thereby rendered unfit for marriage with another man ; and the double belief that a man and a woman must not live together unless they are married, and that once being married they must not 'come unmarried'. This is very clear from "Jude the Obscure". Sue comes to Jude because she wants to live with him, to be one with him, but the next moment she runs away from him because society does not permit that two people without the formal ceremony of the Church should live together. Dealing with the problem of marriage and sex, Hardy also deals with the question of chastity and monogamous marriage. While he discusses these problems Hardy is much ahead of his time, decidedly an anti-Victorian. He states his case plainly in the preface to "Jude the Obscure : Marriage should be dissolvable as soon as it becomes a cruelty to either of the parties, being then essentially and morally no marriage." Reading these lines one is naturally reminded of Bernard Shaw who took almost the same stand on this problem. But it is clear that Hardy

in this respect is essentially a modern writer. When the Victorian poets and novelists like Tennyson, Browning, Dickens sang praises and preached the sacredness of the marriage tie, Hardy advocates a more rational and saner view of marriage. He firmly believed that it was no use maintaining the relationship of marriage once there was no love last between the two parties. Therefore, he went to the point of saying that it was not necessary that we should have legal marriages which become binding on the parties for their life. He expresses this idea through the character of Sue in "Jude the Obscure" : "How hopelessly vulgar an institution legal marriage is." Thus, he felt that marriage in the form of a social institution was becoming a matter of unhappiness rather than happiness. With this idea in mind he very often wished that changes in social conventions and institutions should be brought about to improve the present hopeless situation. In the words of that famous critic, Duffin, "Hardy saw convention mounting to a place in society to which it had no right ; he saw it becoming master where it should have been a servant." In his later novels he protests against these social conventions. Through the tragic story of "Tess", and belated realization of Angel Clare of his mistake under the African skies, Hardy points out the undue importance that the legal institution was acquiring and thereby causing much tragedy which was not justified. In his opinion marriage is not merely a physical union ; it is something better and nobler. While idealists like Browning and many other Victorians believed that marriage was a sacred rite and its dissolution would be heresy. Hardy believes that it is best for all concerned to break the bond if it fails to make the couple happy. In his very famous passage in "Tess" he says : "In the ill-judged execution of the well-judged plan of things, the call seldom produces the comer, the man to love rarely coincides with the hour for loving. Nature does not often say 'See !' to her poor creature, at a time when seeing can lead to happy doing ; or reply 'Here' ! to a body's cry of 'Where' ? till the hide and seek has become an irksome, outworn game. We may wonder whether at the summit of the human progress these anachronisms will be corrected by a finer intuition, a closer interaction of the social machinery than that which now jolts us round and along, but such completeness is not to be prophesied or even conceived

as possible. Enough that in the present case (the union of Tess with Alec d'Urbervile, which causes the tragedy of Tess) as in millions, it was not the two-halves of a perfect whole, that confronted each other at the perfect moment, a missing counterpart wandering independently about the earth, waiting in cross obtuseness till the late time came, out of which delay sprang anxieties, disappointments, shooks, catastrophies, and passing strange destinies." Thus, it was the problem of the "two-halves of a perfect whole" not meeting each other at the perfect moment. It was Hardy's great desire to see the union of perfect halves at the perfect moment. In order that it may take place, Hardy suggests a few steps in his writings. Firstly, marriage is not a sacred tie. It should be dissolved the moment it becomes troublesome to either of the parties. This point of view is clearly expressed in "The Mayor of Casterbridge", "The conversation took a high turn, as it often does on such occasions. The ruin of good men by bad wives, and more particularly, the frustrating of many a promising youth's high aims and hopes, and the extinction of his energies, by an early imprudent marriage was the theme."

"I do for myself that way thoroughly," said the trusser (Henchard), with a contemplative bitterness that was wellnigh resentful. 'I married at eighteen, like a fool that I was and this is the consequence of it.' He pointed at himself and his family with a wave of the hand intended to bring out the penuriousness of the situation."

Henchard further says : "For my part I don't see why men who have got wives, and don't want them, should not get rid of them as these gypsy fellows do to their old horses. Why shouldn't they put them up and sell them by auction to men who are in want of such articles. Why, beged, I'd sell mine this minute if anybody would buy her." And he actually sells his wife. Thus, the first important point suggested by Hardy is that marriage should be dissolved when it becomes a cruelty to either of the parties. Secondly, Hardy suggests that marriage as a legal institution should not exist. As a legal institution it is a source of greater unhappiness than happiness. Thirdly, he suggests that changes in social institutions and conventions be made to make marriage successful. When Hardy suggested all these steps, the majority

of the people of his time felt that he was trying to ruin the very foundations of morality. There was much protest and his novel "Jude the Obscure" was publicly burnt. In his desire to bring about changes in social convention he goes to the point of suggesting in "Tess" that the loss of physical chastity without one's knowing it was no loss of character. It is the purity of heart and mind that counts. Hence Hardy calls Tess a pure woman. In all these concepts, Hardy was far advance of his time and was very much misunderstood. Here it may be noted that he was not an advocate of sensuous pleasures. He is always healthy in his outlook on the relations of man and woman in society.

CHAPTER XV

HARDY'S CONCEPTION OF TRAGEDY AND COMPARISON WITH SHAKESPEARE

The Greek tragedy is the earliest attempt to show the mighty clash between man's dreams and their realization. Every great tragedy in Greek shows the powerful influence exerted on the destiny of man by supernatural forces. Gods take an active part in the human drama. Often they favour the virtuous and those who can win their hearts. But very often they take a vicious interest in the follies and sufferings of mankind. They want the adoration of human beings. They feel delighted when humanity prayed. Humanity suffers and they enjoy. Very beautifully does Tennyson express this view in the following verses :

> "On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
>
> For they lie beside their nector, and the bolts are hurl'd.
>
> Far below in them on the valleys, and the clouds are highly curl'd
>
> Round their golden houses girdled with the gleaming world ;
>
> Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands.
>
> Blight and famine ; plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands.
>
> Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships and praying hands ;
>
> But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song".

The ill-used race of men cleave the soil, sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil ; they store yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil till they perish, some down in hell suffer infinite anguish, while Gods dwell merily in Elysian valleys. This is the Greek conception of tragedy, showing that both our joys and sorrows are determined by relentless gods above. This very Greek idea is expressed by Shakespeare at many places in his dramas. In '*King Lear*' we come across the line,

"Like flies to wanton boys, are we to gods,

They kill us for their sport."

Shakespeare, has taken otherwise, liberty with this view. His tragedies show the heavy odds with which his heroes have to fight. There is no hope, no help from outside, but the heroes are not cowards ; they know their situation, they know their strength and they do not shirk their duty. They fight unto the end and by their courage and fortitude endear themselves to the audience. They bleed but never give in ; they suffer, but never complain ; they are ruined but they never murmur. External powers do interfere, but on the whole, it is some fatal flaw in their character which is responsible for the tragic end of their lives.

Coming to Thomas Hardy we witness a tragic world which is a little different from either of the two just discussed. Here we meet ordinary persons so far as their social and economic status is concerned. But they have certain qualities of head and heart, which raise them above their companions and make them their leaders. These heroes of Hardy become most interesting in their tragic moments. They suffer more than their situation in life can bear, but the brave fight that is put up by them against the mysterious forces, visible or invisible, is highly admirable and ennobling.

Analyzing the causes of tragedy in Hardy and particularly in '*The Mayor of Casterbridge*' we find that besides other minor causes, the most powerful cause is indefinable and inexplicable. Unlike the Greek gods, who are away from the humour scene and sometimes in the scene also, there is some power working in the tragedies of Hardy, which is

above the human plane. In Greek drama, as stated above, gods assume human shapes and have human qualities. They feel and think, and possess attributes which are common to mortal humanity. But in Hardy, the force which works out tragedy in the life of his characters, does not appear in human shape nor does it experience any malice or ill feeling in the happiness of mankind. It is something indefinable, unimaginable and incommunicable. It can be, for the sake of understanding, called Indeterminate and Immanent. But that also does not very properly explain the reality of this force. We may call it Destiny or we may call it Fate. But Destiny and Fate also have their own limitations and qualifications. In truth, it can be conceived only as some governing power of the universe, as something impersonal with no knowledge of man's strivings and with no pity for his sufferings. It may also be thought of as "an unmaliced, unimpassioned, nascient Will", as Hardy has called it in his "*Dynasts*."

The tragedy in '*The Mayor of Casterbridge*' is a brilliant illustration of this view. Henchard, the ordinary hay-trusser by sheer dint of energy and perseverance becomes the Mayor of Casterbridge. He is a man of character and is conscious of the mistakes he has committed in life and is ready to make amends for them. His intentions are good, his efforts are genuine, his feelings are unsullied, yet he is defeated at every step. He pursues the path of righteousness and is taken in custody and consequently ruined by some mysterious power. His commercial ruin is not an event which he very much cares about, but in it also we can read the workings of this power. His loss of Lucetta and subsequently that of Elizabeth at a time when he needed them most in his life is invariably the events brought about by some unconscious power. If this power had any awareness of the sufferings of Henchard, it should not have brought about such unimaginable disasters in his life. This power is unsparing even in the most delicate and petious moments.

In the course of the novel, the hero Henchard often expresses his grave concern at the untimely and ruthless intervention of this force. The evening he persuades Elizabeth to call him her father, he happens to know the identity of the

girl. The whole night he passes through a most unendurable period of agony. He, then feels that he is in the grip of some unseen power—some sinister intelligence bent upon ruining him. So also when he tries to commit suicide, he expresses that something mysterious, some unseen power is against him. We may say that the tragedy, occuring in the life of Henchard is due to social, economic and personal factors, but the ultimate explanation is beyond human calculation and grasp. Causation—the series of causes and effects may help us to some extent in fathoming the mysterious depths of this power, but the reality remains far from us. It is only a vague and uncertain understanding that we may have.

Thus according to Hardy the governing power of the universe is going on and on without considering the feelings and sufferings of mankind. It is completely unconscious and unsparing. It is blind to everything that happens in the world. Man may come and man may go but it will go on for ever. Like a railway engine this power is altogether regardless of the incidents and accidents that occur in its way. Its one purpose seems to be motion. Humanity may perish or persist, but it goes on performing its function without pausing to stand and stare.

Comparison of Hardy and Shakespeare in the Conception of Tragedy : Before Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe had revolutionized the conception of tragedy. It was he, who gave to Enghish drama the romantic tragedy and the blank verse. Shakespeare literally developed and followed his methods. Now what is the conception of tragedy that Shakespeare had? Although like Marlowe, Shakespeare never had any university education to help him in evaluating literary standards and innovating new dramanic techniques, and to proceed with a well-defined conception in the composition of his world famous tragedies, yet the critics have formulated some theories, formulae and opinions in regard to Shakespearean tragedy. Bradley has found that in Shakespearean tragedy 'Character is Fate,' meaning thereby that tragedy springs as a natural consequence of some fatal flaw in the character of the hero, who is otherwise blessed with unique qualities of head and heart and who belongs to a very high status in society either as king or prince, or as

general or nobleman. Shakespeare thus shows, holds Bradley, that there is conflict in the mind of his hero because of one fatal flaw in his character and the result is invariably suffering, reversal of fortune, fall of status which he holds and ultimately death. Besides this flaw in the character of the hero, there are some other factors also that are responsible for the tragedy. They are the elements of chance, abnormal states of mind and the interference of supernatural beings. But the critics have not paid much attention to these factors and have sought the explanation of the tragedy largely in the character of the hero. The ultimate impression left after reading or seeing any of the tragedies of Shakespeare is one of 'tragic waste.' We feel that something highly valuable and serviceable has been wasted. We are, nevertheless, elevated to a plane of higher altitude because of the excess of imaginative and aesthetic satisfaction derived therefrom. This, in short, is the conception of Shakepearean tragedy. Now we turn to Hardy.

The first obvious point of difference to be noted between Hardy and Shakespeare is in their conception of the tragic hero. We noted above that Shakespeare's hero is a man of high social status. But this is not at all so in the tragedies of Hardy. Here we find the ordinary man to have captured the position of the Shakespearean hero. Hardy has given the central part in his tragic novels always to persons of poor and low classes. These persons are not highly lettered and cultured in the Elizabethan sense. They are not gentlemen or noble dames of the Elizabethan court. Instead they are farmers, hay-trussers, dairy-workers, masons and furze-cutters. In '*Far From the Madding Crowd*' we have Gabriel Oak, a farmer and shepherd as the hero, in '*The Mayor of Casterbridge*,' we have Henchard, the hay-trusser, in '*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Tess, a girl of poor family and a worker on farms especially in dairies, in '*Jude the Obscure*,' we find that the hero is an ordinary boy Jude, who at the age of eleven aspires for high academic attainments, but is all through the novel a mason: and in '*The Return of the Native*' the hero is Mr. Yeobright, a man who returns disgusted with the busy and sophisticated life of Paris and becomes a furze-cutter after his marriage with Eutacia Vye. Notwithstanding their low posi-

tion in society, these heroes and heroines of Hardy have qualities, which have given them the place they occupy in the novels. Tess is 'a pure woman,' and Henchard is a man of character.

The cause of tragedy in Shakespeare is one fatal flaw in the character of the hero. Now what are the causes of tragedy in Hardy ? Critics are not unanimous on this point. Generally there are two views held in this respect. One view is that tragedy in Hardy is brought about by the criss cross of circumstances and that the hero's efforts are doomed to failure by some jealous power. The 'Immanent Will' is the cause of tragedy. Man is a mere puppet in the hands of circumstances. Things are so arranged by Fate that tragedy is inevitable. There is no God in heaven and everything is wrong with the world. Man proposes but the power beyond human control disposes,—this is what happens in the tragedies of Hardy. The interference of Fate in the human drama assumes various forms. Sometimes, we find it in the form of weather failures and untimely storms as it is in the case of Henchard's commercial ruin ; sometimes it is the social conventions that ruin the happiness of otherwise good and pure persons, as it is in the case of Tess and Jude. 'Providence is nothing but coquettish' remarks Hardy in *The Ruturn of the Native*.

The other view is that tragedy in Hardy is brought about by the character of the hero concerned. It is the character of the hero himself which is responsible for the sufferings and the final catasrophe of his life. The critics belonging to this camp do not believe in the determinism of Hardy, although they believe in reasonable explanation offered by the sequence of cause and effect. It is the first cause that sets the sequence rolling. The failings of character at every step intensify and precipitate the tragedy. Whenever a crisis is presented, choice is given to the hero but every time wrong choice is made by him and the result is the tragedy of a vast magnitude. There is often a very minute psychological analysis, given by Hardy, of the inner conflict of this leading figure. The critics who cherish the view that there is less inner conflict in Hardy than in Shakespeare appear unjustified when we go through the pages of 'Tess' and 'Jude' and

'The Mayor of Casterbridge.' There is more subtle study of the heart and head in Hardy than in Shakespeare.

As a matter of fact, tragedy in Hardy is brought about by the character of the hero as much as by the impact of external forces. Life is a mystery and no true artist can afford a complete explanation thereof. Nor is it his task indeed. And Hardy who is an artist first and a philosopher later has given no explanation. His casual impressions and their occasional expressions should not be questioned too much. He was too great an artist to be confined to one set of rules. He was wide awake at the tragedy of life. As he saw it, so he painted it without any idea of theorizing or moralizing.

The Mayor of Casterbridge quite fittingly illustrates the observations made in the preceding paragraphs. We find in the novel that an ordinary hay-trusser, having sold his wife and daughter in a fit of intoxication, by sheer dint of energy and perseverance becomes the Mayor of the town of Casterbridge. But it does not take much time before Fortune stops smiling and the highest man of the time suffers a crisis and meets his tragic end. The crops fail and then yield, bringing about a tragic reverse in the life of the Mayor. Susan dies, and Henchard is deprived of his wife : Lucetta goes away to Farfrae, and he is robbed of his love. Farfrae establishes independently and his business is ruined. Elizabeth whom he loves as his true daughter forsakes him, and his parental affection suffers a mighty loss. Thus with an unbearable void in the emotional constitution of his being he dies a tragic death. Yet it is not a cheap and ignoble death. He has faced the blows of Fate and the buffets of fortune and society quite heroically. He knows that he is in the grip of some 'sinster intelligence' bent upon ruining his happiness yet he is not daunted by his misfortunes, and, declares heroically, *My punishment is not greater than I can bear*. He is conscious of the wild oats he had sown, and attempts to make amends for them, but he fails repeatedly. The struggle put up by him against the odds is definitely heroic and inspiring. Inspite of his weaknesses we love him, praise him and sympathise with the sufferings of this man who has character and rugged determination. There is no doubt that he is the

most imposing male character of Hardy, a man in whom the novelist has presented an Achilles, a Samson shorn, a Hamlet with his 'to be or not to be.' He has tigerish energy and speed, compassion of the purest kind and the unadulterated milk of human kindness. Henchard's tragedy may be explained both ways. That he is a man of character nobody can ever doubt and the fatal end is entirely due to his own faults. But at the same time the share of external circumstances is nonetheless small.

However, tragedy in Hardy is not depression or despairing, it is elevating and stimulating ; it does not shake our faith in life ; all the more it strengthens it ; it does not make us light-hearted, but makes us wiser and better ; it does not throw us down, it elevates and ennobles us and we are the better to have gone through the highly pitched emotional and intellectual atmosphere of the tragedy. The aesthetic experience and pleasure make one a different being. The impression of tragic waste is there, we rise and fall with the hero. And this is what a genuine Shakespearean tragedy also does.

Again like Shakespeare, Hardy has given a due place to the comic element in his tragic world. Often it has been said and rightly too that the comic characters of Hardy resemble the Shakespearean comedians. Let us note that Hardy's comic humour is genial, light-hearted and native. It is born of the countryside atmosphere and environment. It is only the rustics of Hardy that provide us with his natural and national disposition which is a marked characterisitic of English temperament and English literature. Then like the Shakespearean comic interludes these rustic characters in the novel of Hardy throw into great relief the tragic intensity of the plot. It is not exaggerating to say that Coney, Longways, Mother Cuxom, and Abel Whittle & Co. in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* can appropriately be compared with the fool, the clown, the Feste, and the grave diggers of Shakespeare.

One thing more is also to be noted. Shakespeare in his tragedies has invariably used blank verse. His tragedies are highly poetic and some portions of them can be enjoyed as separate and individual pieces of poetry. On the other hand, Hardy's tragedies are in prose and they are novels. But this

in no way lets his tragedies suffer from prosaicness. His tragic novels are intensely poetic. Really the çonception as well as the execution of their themes is bubbling with passion and imagination. There are always highly sensitive and dramatic scenes, Truly have some critics been led to find in Hardy a greater poet thàn a novelist. The beginning, the middle and the end of his novels are works of imagination, passion and poets. Like Shakespeare who is highly poetic towards the close of scene, Hardy also rises to heights, seldom attained, towards the close of his chapters.

Thus we conclude that though the two tragic artists lived and wrote in two entirely different atmospheres and eras, and worked in different fields of literay composition, yet their achievements in their own ways are equally great and immortal. Hardy has done in fiction what Shakespeare did in the field of drama.

CHAPTER XVI

APPRECIATION OF HARDY AS A NOVELIST

Hardy's novels belong to the Victorian Age and his poetry to the modern age. His first novel, *Desperate Remedies,* was published in 1871 and is obviously immature. *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), which is a sweet and faithful rendering of country-life, is a decided improvement, and the group of rustics in the novel is thoroughly characteristic of Hardy. *A pair of Blue Eyes* (1873) may be said to mark the end of his period of literary apprenticeship. In *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) Hardy produced his first masterpiece. *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1876), the story of a butler's daughter who labours to get into high society, is a very poor work in comparison with either the masterpiece that had preceded it or the masterpiece that was to follow. In 1878 appeared *The Return of the Native*, another great novel of Hardy. After this he wrote three novels that are not among his greatest *The Trumpet-Major* (1879) Hardy's one excursion into historical fiction, *A Laodicen* (1881) and *Two on a Tower* (1882). These were followed by two great novels, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, (1885), *The Story of a Man of Character*, and the *Woodlander's* (1887). Hardy next produced his greatest novel, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), in which he reached the summit of his art. This is a tragic story of woman, 'a pure woman' Hardy calls her who is continuously pursued by the shadowing hand of a malignant destiny and who commits murder and dies on the Scaffold. Hardy's last novel, *Jude the Obscure* (1895), is a grim masterpiece which relates the life-history of a craftsman who has to relinquish his noble ideals on being entangled in a love-affair with a 'mere female animal.' This is a ruthless novel pervaded by an almost unrelieved gloom, and as a work of art falls below *Tess of the D'Urbervilles.* Hudson writes about this novel, "Its power is overwhelming, yet the power is so

misdirected and dissipated that potential tragedy is distorted into dark madness." The hostile reception given to *Jude* very much annoyed Hardy and made him give up his career as a novelist and turn to poetry.

Hardy's novels and poems are, throughout, the work of a man painfully dissatisfied with the age in which he lived. He was homesick for the past, the past of England before the strong roots of English manhood and womanhood had been overlaid by what seemed to Hardy a thin soil of artificial niceness miscalled education and culture. He distrusted modern civilization because he suspected that its effect was frequently to decivilize and weaken those to whom Nature and old custom had given stout hearts, clear heads and enduring spirit. Ancient and modern are constantly at war in his books, where none is happy who has felt the unhealthy touch of artificial and school-bred refinement. Though Hardy's mind was shaped to some extent by the theories of later German philosophers who regarded the present as a great advance on the past, he thought gratefully of the simple medieval culture lingering on in his native country of Dorset which became the Wessex of his novels. For Hardy this Wessex was still the old England. Its woods, its heaths, its barrows, its barns and byres—all these stood in memory of a noble antiquity making mute protest against invading aggressive modernity. Hardy painted the pictures of the Wessex landscape with almost an epic delight and breathed life into inanimate objects of Nature. He was as thoroughly acquainted with the life and manners of Wessex as Walter Scott with Scotland or Wordsworth with Cumberland, or O' Henry with New York. In fact, Hardy is a regional novelist and the locality of Wessex forms more than a background in the large number of novels that he wrote, for its spirit seems to brood over them and profoundly influences most of the characters. "His Wessex" says Priestley, "is the special environment of his characters, whose development could not be understood without reference to it." Hardy's natural landscapes steeped into the atmosphere of Wessex are as grand in their immensity and as intensely moving in their appeal as his epic heroes or heroines. Whether it is the grim vastness of Egdon Heath in *The Return of the Native*, or the

delightful ripeness of Blackmoor Vale in *Tess* or the tree-covered solitude of *The Woodlanders*. Hardy's places are fully as memorable as his people. On Egdon, indeed, the men and women are pigmies—the Heath is itself the demon, moulding and conditioning the lives of those who dwell upon it and who are part of its own life. However, it is this element which save Hardy from falling into narrow provincialism and raises his work to the level of universal appeal.

From the standpoint of plot-construction, we find that Hardy's novels are unexampled masterpieces. All the incidents and events are skilfully co-ordinated together and there are no loose patches to hang about. The structure of his every great novel is built brick by brick and stone by stone, and the whole design appears perfectly clear in its outline and within its own framework complete. It is said that his ealry experience as an architect is responsible for the architectural conception and the faultless construction of his novels. In this respect. Hardy is in strong contrast with his great contemporary Meredith, whose novels are absurdly loose in construction, although the latter had advised the former to give more attention to plot, an advice which the former followed almost literally. Another noteworthy feature of the novels of Hardy is the development we can trace in them of the novelist's manner—his gradual passing from the dramatic to the epic method. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* seems to mark the transition, which is half-epic and half-dramatic in its method. The earlier masterpieces like *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Woodlanders* and *The Return of the Native* are tragic novels of great passion with a group of people in rural surroundings. But the later novels like '*Tess* or *Jude*' relate the life history of one person only, and hence they are epic novels.

Hardy possessed unique powers of characterization. Many of his characters, both major and minor, are created with the fulness, vigour and assurance of a Shakespeare or a Dickens. His plots may be conventional, for they are all love-stories with two men loving the same woman or vice versa, but his characters are altogether new and modern for the purposes of fiction. While nearly all the ancient writers have dealt with high life, with such illustrous characters as those of kings,

queens, princes, knights and warriors. Hardy has chosen for his novels characters, belonging to the low strata of society, like peasants, hay-trussers, farmers, milkmaids and craftsmen. And yet it was the inimitable skill and genious of Hardy that infused epic grandeur in simple and commonplace characters and raised them to the height of elemental forces. Rightly does Compton-Rickett remark, "His characters are elemental forces on a background of vaster elemental forces : they are the natural expressions of sleepy woodland places, gaunt austere hills, purling streams, lonely open spaces." Surely his men and women are the most vividly actualized when they are simple, primal characters. Rustics such as Poorgrass and Dewy ; sturdy young countrymen like Winterbourne ; passionate wayward women such as Eustacia Vye ; plausible scamps like Sergeant Tory. The group of rustic folk which figures in many of the Wessex novels is thoroughly Hardian. Most of the humour in the novels centres round these rustics, and the quality of this humour has sometimes justifiably been described as Shakespearean. One thing more to be noted with regard to Hardy's characters is that his female figures are more important than his male characters. Compton Rickett observes, "Admirable as many of his male characters are, they yield both in clarity and intensity of interest to his women ; and since woman is more elemental than man, swayed far more by the instinctive life, their superiority is another illustration of Hardy's peculiar skill in dealing with the primal type.' Really, Tess, Sue, Bathsheba, Elizabeth-Jane, Elfride, Eustacia, Viviette, Ethelberta and Marty are a galaxy of wonderful feminine characters, all distinct from another. There is not the same variety and force among Hardy's men whom Lionel Johnson divides into two classes, first country-heroes and lovers, solid, massive men like Gabriel Oak or Giles Winterbourne who face the world squarely ; and second youths like Clym Yeobright too delicate to be impulsive, too gentle to be vicious, yet having a certain hardness about them which helps them in fighting against their relentless destiny.

Generally Hardy is regarded as a pessimist who has painted in his novels a very dark and grim picture of human life. His is a world abounding in thwarted desires, unsatisfied

longings, undeserved sufferings, clash of duties, broken commandments, disappointments and disillusionments, high and noble aspirations ending in miserable failure. He believes in a Supreme Power which is indifferent to human affairs ; in *The Dynasts* Hardy calls it the Immanent Will. Sometimes he seems to imply that this power is not merely indifferent, but that it actually takes delight in human misery, that "as flies to wanton boys are we to the gods ; they kill us for their sport." This is the attitude expressed in the closing sentence of *Tess of the D'Urberville* : "Justice was done, and the President of the Immortals had ended his sport with Tess." "But with the passage of time Hardy came to speak of the Immanent Will as something which is neither good nor evil, but something which is altogether indifferent blind and purposeless. In *The Dynasts* where his ideas reached final expression, he held that there is no active intelligence, no just and loving God behind human destiny but that Creation is swayed by an unconscious mechanical force, sightless, dumb, mindless and equally indifferent to the sufferings and joys of mankind.

Sometimes in Hardy tragedy is carried beyond the limits of both art and nature. Often there is a bitterness of feeling which is beyond the limits of human toleration. It is not that what he urges is not true, but there is another side to his picture, a happy and bright side, which is equally true, and upon which Hardy is silent. In his earlier writings there are some rays of hope, or what he himself calls 'occasional interludes of happiness', and sweetness and bitterness of life are admirably cortrasted ; but in the later novels—in *Tess* and *Jude* especially, rich in power and insight as these books are —the gloom is needlessly intensified. They are expansions in prose, of Matthew Arnold's deeply meloncholy lines—

> "We are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept by confused alarms of struggle and flight
> Where ignorant armies clash by night."

But this extremely tragic view of life as revealed in the novels of Hardy should not lead us to believe that he is a cynic, or an immoral philosopher. On the other hand, Hardy is a soul full of the milk of human kindness. His sense of

pity is perhaps more acute than that of any other modern writer. Realizing as he does the terrible handicaps of life, he treats with gentle tolerance the passionate misdoings of men and women ; and is better disposed to the sinner than to the saint.

However, it is clear that Hardy did not see eye to eye with the views prevalent in his times. To him the omnipotent God was not acceptable and the Church was too impotent to redress the ills of the spirit. On the contrary it was a hot bed of corruption. He found that conventional associations and institutions crushed human values. Hence he always revolted against all of them. Even in nature he could not find the healing power. His view of life is, therefore, not very bright. But on the other hand we should not call him a pessimist without some qualification. Hardy's philosophy of life is the same as that of Shopenheur. It calls for the renunciation of will to live. Often while fighting against the circumstances, his characters are crushed, although the fight they put up is certainly admirable. And Hardy is on the side of his fighting friends. Hence his sympathy and kindness. It is seldom that his characters fall because of themselves. In 'Henchard' of course the tragedy is mostly because of his inner conflict. But in the majority of novels hostile forces are shown as taking vicious pleasure in ruining the lives of innocent and simple people. Tess is an innocent sufferer at the hands of social conventions and Jude suffers because of the marriage institution being considered essential for man and woman to live as husband and wife. The result is that human beihgs suffer like flies and maggots. And the irony is that God thought of as the dispenser of justice and shower of mercy sits silently on the unseen and invisible heights. He does not care for the grief of His struggling and suffering children.

Hardy is sombre and grey probably because he was sensitive and tender-hearted. Moreover his own life was a big factor in moulding his attitude towards life. Hardy finds no solution in any of the accepted ways. He was a thinker, honest and sincere, remaining always a student of the inexhaustible book of life. With years his philosophy of life became grey but it was never dogmatic and despairing. He

had faith in the divinity of life and no honest reader can lose faith in life by reading him.

As regards the style of Hardy, it may be said, that it corresponds with and "expresses the profoundest intention of the writer". Duffin calls it "essentially of the philosophic type, an emanation of his mind." For ordinary narrative purposes Hardy has a style that is bleak, bare and bald, although as Arnold said of Wordsworth, "it is bald as the mountain tops are bald, with a boldness that is full of grandeur'. Hardy's style rarely lacks dignity or strength. He could often vary his style to suit the purpose in hand ; in books like *Far from the Madding Crowd* and *The Woodlanders* the pastoral style predominates, the tragic style in *The Mayor* and *Jude*. Hardy was a great master in the use of similes and metaphors. Pedants, however, can find fault with his misrelated participles and split infinitives and his occasional mistakes of grammar. It is also possible to regret his partiality for scientific or technical terms which he often used to ensure the accuracy of his descriptions. That Hardy was not a born master of style like Thackeray, nor a made one like Stevenson cannot be denied. But the style is in the case of Hardy, a perfect expression of his temper and personality and his view of life. As Crompton-Rickett observes, "It is an admirable style, clear, straightforward, unpretentious, yet capable of carrying subtle implications, and always instinct with a simple dignity, and compelling sincerity. There is no straining after effect ; no self-conscious attitudinising."

In short, Hardy saw the eternal drama of human life—the conflict between the aspiration of man and the jealousy of something beyond control. He portrayed it so faithfully and vigorously and aesthetically that quite won for him universal recognition as a supreme artist. He is of brotherhood of the greatest novelists of all ages and places. He began by writing verse and closed by writing epic poetry. There are quite naturally, critics who hold that Hardy was greater as a poet than as a novelist. But the greatest critic—time—has his own verdict which none can dare defy. To-day Hardy is regarded by universal consent as a greater novelist than á poet.

———

CHAPTER XVII

SELECT OPINIONS ON HARDY'S WORKS

(1)

"The deeper foundations of Hardy's thought are those of the Victorian mind : positive data, a respect for science, curiosity at the cosmic and human past. Upon this basis, others about him were raising the cult of omnipotent evolution, fruitful industry, of pacific democracy. His original instinct, after a quick transition settles in a coherent system of directly opposed beliefs, which at times are formulated, at times remain latent, and are revealed only through powerful concrete expressions.

He accepts science, and feels its spell, but joylessly. His tastes lead him away from the fever and fret of industry. A meditative and solitary man he keeps in harmony with the austere though verdant country-side of Dorsetshire, where he spent his boyhood, and it is there, in retirement, that his life develops, uneventful except for stages of his work. His books almost ignore the new facts of the present-day world : the background is their eternal framework of the hills and the moors, all their vistas open upon those simple, unchanging realities the neighbourhood of which throws light on the true relationship between the universe and man.

His plots are not simple. They grow out of elementary passion ; ambition, love, greed, jealousy, the thirst for knowledge ; and the springs which move them are psychological. More and more as he progresses in his career, Hardy tends to shift the construction of his novels to the inner world ; he writes a moral drama, shows us a conflict of contradictory wills, guided themselves by feelings. But the development of these conflicts is crossed at every moment by accidents which interrupt them. Ironical, malevolent, fatal chance is, as it were, an invisible third party in all the relationships of

human beings ; now it seems to express an obscure cruelty lurking in the universe ; now in a more, philosophical guise, it is the experimental revelation of laws which individuals in their self deception ignore, and against which probability demands that they should be some day crushed. In this latter sense, chance becomes the chastisement of the unavoidable selfishness of everyday life. Whether one aspect or the other be predominant, the repeated working of the inimical luck is largely responsible for the tragic atmosphere which Hardy's heroes succeed but rarely in escaping.

Yet there are strong-willed souls. The solitude and concentration of country habits have saved them from the dispersion and constant wear that eat up the town-dweller. There are some among them whose vitality has been impaired by reflection, by art, and the exhausting work of the intelligence; but conquering them. Clym Yeobright, Hanchard and Jude are three different aspects of that rustic robustness, struggling against the experience of pain of the disease of thought . . . . However interesting they may be—and many among them are original figures, with strong unforgettable features—the characters of Hardy do not bear the stamp of a faultless art. They are laboriously constructed, and from the outside ; their creator is not under the immediate spell of intuition. In this field, he is the architect rather than the poet ; the building is sound, but its frame and joints are visible. There occur, in the development of these beings, sudden crises and breaks, angles one might say, where one feels an arbitrary decision rather than an inevitable growth".

—*Emile Legouis and Louis Cazamian*

(2)

"From reading most of Hardy's works the natural impluse is to imagine their author as a morose, cynical being. This is a delusion. His surface personality seems to be reflected only in the pure and gentle vein of humour which animates the humbler country-figures in his novels . . . . Hardy always regarded himself, as a writer, as a kind of aeroline harp, blown upon by all the winds of the heavens, wild and gentle, good and bad, cheerful and sorrowful, sentimental and ironical, frivolous and sober. But to all this variety, the

harp gave but one response it was attuned permanently to a single chord, in a harmonious, but minor mode. His was a nature that felt all emotions, but reacted in literature to only a few. His spirit does not mean that he failed to perceive, understand and feel deeply the untragic amenities of existence".

" 'People who print very warm words have sometimes very cold manners', says one of Hardy's characters. By reversing the sense of this statement, without destroying its validity, it can be made to apply very nicely to Hardy's cold words and warm manners."

(3)

" 'It was Hardy's own fault if people would insist on discussing his philosophy. He pleaded that he was not a philosopher, which was true ; yet he was continually talking about this philosophy of his and explaining it, and not merely explaining it away either. It consisted of the general conclusions to which he had been driven by his reading of the scientists and their expositors and annotators. It was unfortunate that he kept shifting his ground, and that the metaphysics underlying' *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, do not tally with those of *The Return of the Native* or with those of *Tess* and *Jude*. Hardy was always seeking a better theory to substantiate his tragic view of things, and at any rate each novel maintains consistency from beginning to end. Hardy was a confused thinker : his greatness was in his having embodied a profundity of meaning in his characters and their histories, to have made the drama in which they play their own parts, a symbol of humanity at war with the universe. He had every right to give his own imaginative sense of reality. Truth to life in fiction is only a medium, realism is only a method, a means of showing things in the pattern into which they fall when reflected in the writer's consciousness. But, whilst the meaning which there was for Hardy should clearly emerge, the drama should at the same time be a transparent likeness of the existence with which all are familiar. Yet . . . . a story by Thomas Hardy continually betrays that he has a case to state, an indictment to argue ;

there is an obvious overplus of mischance leading to a solution, or insoluble enigma, obviously ready-made; in fact, the problem is usually set out in such terms that the tragic conclusion is inescapable. To make these superstitious aims more glaring, and his tinkering with the circumstances more suspicious, he interjects his indignant outbursts and denunciation; it is as if a playwright walked upon the stage and began talking freely about the ulterior meanings of the play. Tragic as are such novels as *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess* and *Jude* they all have in them something that exceeds the scope of tragedy : they are an assignment and an accusation ; in other words, they embody an emotive exposition of Thomas Hardy's philosophy."

(4)

"As would be expected, Hardy's enchanting pictures of outdoor life and the scenery of earth and sky set a fashion in country novels embellished with word-painting of natural surroundings. Dozens of imitators promptly arrived, who discovered counterparts of Wessex in this or that corner of Britain, in the neighbouring Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall, in Yorkshire, Lancashire, and East Anglia, in the Lowlands and the Highlands, in the Western Isles and in Wales and Ireland. That Charlatan, Hall Caine was following Hardy's lead when he annexed the Isle of Man as his private appandage. The influence made iteslf felt still further. There was a notable outbreak of regionalism among American novelist, and all over Europe any province or district markedly stamped with local characteristics was seized and exploited. This was due in the main to the vogue of Hardy even beyond the seas, although the French might allege older examaplars in George Sand's Berrichor idylls, Erkmann-Chatrian's Alsatian romances, Pierre Loti's novels of Brittany, and Dauder's conquests in the Midi ; the Germans could have pointed to Auerback's Black Forest tales and Fritz Reuter's stories of Machlenburg, and Norweigians to Bjornsen and Lie. But more symptomatic of the age that produced Hardy were the many amateur or trained naturalists who went out into the fields and woods to observe and meditate, and into the farmyards and villages to watch man at work or at leisure,

and to delineate him in a less dramatic but not less philosophical manner than Hardy, as one interesting item in the great pageant of the seasons. These were his real kindred, much more so that those who strove to emulate his novels, they had experienced their charm or their success at the circulating libraries. Their ulterior ancestory might, indeed be traced further back, for Hardy was not so much an originator as one caught by a native and powerful afflatus, older even than Chaucer and Shakespeare. This wistful and often ecstatic intercourse with nature, this quest of the simple life in the rustic and pastoral world, is an ever-recurring episode in literature, especially English literature. In this sense, Izzak Walton, and White of Selbourne, Frank Buckland (who was still alive, though an old man), and the poets, Thomson and Collins Blomfield and Clare, his countryman Barnes and above all Wordsworth, were Hardy's predecessors. Among his contemporaries, Hardy's nearest affinity was Richard Jefferies, eight years his junior." —*Earnes A. Baker*

"The History of the English Novel"

(5)

"No English novelist of our age has been more affected by science than Hardy. The immutability of Nature, the mutability of human life, the bigness of Nature, the littleness of man, the inexorable character of natural laws, and the puny struggles of human personalities trying to evade them. What Buckle did in history, Hardy has done in fiction, taken for his themes the unimportance of the individual man.

"Now all this might have conceivably proved very unattactive in a story-teller; whatever criticism may be passed on it from a philosophic standpoint if Mr. Hardy show himself to be nothing more than a scientific observer. But he is also, and quite as emphatically, a poetic observer. He has a sensitive, brooding imagination, that loves to play over the past, and sees in the mouldering relics of a bygone age smybols of pomp and power that still can unconsciously affect the imagination and lives of men ; he is for ever noticing those transmitted impulses of pagan feeling and religious

sentiment that run through generations; watching with intense pre-occupation the mingling of the finer elemental qualities, sexual devotion, pity, courage, endurance, with the coarser 'ape and tiger' instincts; showing a marked affinity, as an observer of peasant life, with the naturalism of writers like Zola, he suffuses his naturalism with a rarer delicacy and beauty".

(6)

"All qualifications notwithstanding, there is a dignity and beauty about Mr. Hardy's best work, for which all lovers of literature may be grateful; to accuse him as some have done, of lax morality in his presentation of life, is ludicrously beside the mark. Errors of taste there are, no doubt; he has the blunt outspokenness of the countrymen, and there is about his works something of the coarseness of Nature herself but though sometimes coarse, he is never trivial or debasing. The furtive prurience that mars some fiction, the juggling with moral values that mars other fiction today, is aboslutely alien to his stern and austerely noble attitude towards human life. Differences of opinion must naturally be held of Hardy as a critic of life; but as an artist, a painter of certain concrete aspects of that life he is among the greatest in English Literature." —*Arthur Compton-Rickett*

"A History of English Literature"

(7)

"No doubt, the thread of which the Wessex novels and poems are woven is a dark one of 'pessimism'; but what matters in art is not so much the name of the material, as its quality. The attitude common to all tragic writers may be defined through these lines quoted by Hardy in his preface to Tess:

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods,

They kill us for their sport:

but the great writer of tragedy manages to convey that though this be the truth, it is well that men should behave thus and thus, that Othello is fairer than Iago. Not that fault is to

be imputed to the wrong-doer ; he also is a pebble of fate, destined to play his part in the eternal drama of good and evil. The end of tragedy, then, is to show the dignity of man for all his helpless littleness in face of the universe, for all his nullity under the blotting hand of time.

"Hardy's pessimism is not oppressive, it is not the outcome of a soul who rebelled against life. Rebellion against life itself has never produced great art, for the great artist can, with Keats, see, beauty in all things, even in the inexorable working out of the odds against man.

"Greeks saw man trapped in the meshes of Fate ; Shakespeare largely in those of character, from which was derived the well-known clench, not wholly justified, 'character is destiny'. In what particular sort of web did it seem to Hardy mankind is caught ? Hardy's attitude was, as with all great writers, essentially of his time, and the fatal web in which he saw man entangled was that of man's own consciousness of futility. Man suffers, man struggles ; Christianity gave him reasons for the suffering and the struggle, and made them worth while ; but when a man comes no longer to believe in Christianity, the sufferings to which he is subjected seem only the work of some maleficent, or faintly sardonic, indifferent demon, infesting the universe. We come across his statement of it repeatedly ; in Tess, where we are told that Angel Clare 'became wonderfully free from the chronic melancholy which is taking hold of the civilized races with the decline of belief in a beneficent power'. Hardy's tragic net is essentially a product of modernity.

"The pity of Tess lies in the fact that she was too delicate an 'instrument to carve crude life into a satisfactory shape'. It was because of her sensitiveness, her integrity, her purity, that she was brought to ruin, not because she once, half-unwittingly, committed a fault. Had she been as lumpish, as thick-skinned, as her mother, she would have found no difficulty in adjusting herself. It is always fineness which brings about the crash of Hardy's heroes and heroines, as it is fineness which impels Hamlet or Othello. But whereas in Shakespeare the fineness is always marred by a fatal flaw in character which brings about the disaster, with Hardy the

fault usually lies in the wanton, unseeing motion of the universe, of the Immanent Will, full of sound and fury. It works in spite of itself, unconsciously, after the manner of organism, as shown to us in "The Dynasts". In Hardy it is usually the will which does the harm, but not always. The *Mayor of Casterbridge* gives the picture of a man who fell by his own fault as much as by that of an unsentient creation; even if creation, and this is true of Shakespeare also, is ultimately responsible for making the character.

"His popularity resides possibly in the choice he has made of objects for his pity. It is true that he does not pander to the mob, but it is also true that his heroes do not differ in circumstances from the average humbly placed man or woman. Any man might be Jude, any woman Tess, whereas few of us can be circumstanced like Lady Macbeth. Thus, we can live ourselves into the character, endow ourselves with the praiseworthy qualities they possess, attribute our failure not to our weakness, but the harshness of fate.

"To give us 'the common sense of what men were and are' in relation to the net in which they are caught, Hardy developed nature as a character farther than any other writer. His descriptions are never mere decoration, a sort of frieze thrown across the background, as they are in Scott, for instance. With Hardy the earth labours, suffers and groans, is scarred with experience like any human being. The plot, the pattern, of *The Return* .... would not be what it is but for the character called Egdon Heath, which streaks the whole tale. The only thing comparable in literature is the setting of *Wuthering Heights*. But even in that great masterpiece it is partly a setting, it does not enter into the lives of Bronte's characters quite in the same way as Egdon Heath does into those of Eustacia Vye and Mrs. Yeobright. No one who has read it can ever forget that astonishing first chapter where Egdon Heath is introduced to us; so much of the experience of the human race is crammed into it. The landscape really is part of the emotion." —*Bonamy Dobree*

"English Critical Essays" (20th century)

(8)

"According to all accounts of Hardy's early life his was

an extremely sensitive temperament, rather given to melancholy, easily moved to tears, fond of solitude, though by no means inaccessible to good-fellowship and enjoying a good laugh as much as any one, especially if the joke was of a profane or sardonic character. All his life he had a weakness for gruesome incidents, grim legends, creepy stories, accounts of spells, omens, ghosts, murders, suicides, and the like. He was always jotting down such things is his diary, and would visit the scene to find out all he could about some sinister event and enjoy its full flavour. He never seems to have missed a funeral, at least of any one distinguished or of his own kin, and is full of reminiscences of those melancholy festivals. This hankering after the gloomy, the ghoulish, and mysterious helps to account for what has been called the 'fetishism' in Hardy's view of nature and man. To him there was no such thing as inanimate nature. He could never banish his deep-rooted sense of the supernatural, or reduce himself to the calm indifference of a Huxley or a Leslie Stephen. By accepting the scientific attitude he rationalised his acute apprehension of mankind's tragic plight; but it was only with his intellect that he accepted it; something deeper was always in conflict with the rationalization. He never found full satisfaction in the materialistic philosophy to which he resigned himself. It was not merely that he had repudiated one orthodoxy to capitulate to another, that other by no means more stable, if so be that rationalism ignores faculties of the mind as valid as pure reason, if pure reason be only one half of human intelligence. It was not merely that his mind staggered and oscillated from one theory of causation to another, from seeing man in the grip of hostile forces to the acceptance of pure chance as the arbiter; and then from a view approximating to the idea of character as fate to the conception of an immanent Will pervading and controlling all things, but unconscious of any purpose. He had a grudge against the universe which he could not throw off, a feeling of resentment at injustices and wanton cruelty which must have some object on which to wreak itself. The problem of evil was a monstrous and harassing conundrum. Assuredly, some power that hated good must be in the saddle thwarting every endeavour of man to circumvent his fate.

The absurdity of a trust in Providence drove him to the opposite belief.

"As seen by him it is a tragic theme. The world he lived in had something to do with this. There was plenty of tragedy in the life of the Wessex labourer with its poverty and its passion. Life to them was life in the raw. Dependent and ignorant, exposed alike to the oppressions of the social system and the caprice of the weather, at every moment of their existence the people among whom Hardy was brought up were made conscious of men's helplessness in the face of circumstances, Hardy, too, was the man to realise the tragedy implicit in such a life. He had a tender heart, unusually responsive to the spectacle of suffering. As a little boy, he even hated seeing the boughs lopped off the trees; the first time he saw a dead bird he was struck by an appalling, unforgettable chill of horror. By the time he was fifteen, a shadow had already fallen across his vision of life. He tells us he remembers lying back in the sun and wishing that he need not grow up. He wanted to stay just as he was, in the same place, with the same few friends. The infinite possibilities mature life seemed to hold for failure and for suffering appalled him, and made him shrink back into such security as he already knew. This shirking from life embodied itself in the form of spectral fear. He fancied, he says, 'that a figure stood in his van, with arm uplifted, to knock him back from any pleasant prospect he indulged in as probable.' And not only him. It was the enemy of mankind in general. For Hardy's was a speculative mind, instinctively reasoning from particular observations to a general conclusion. Since the world he looked at seemed so full of pain and disappointment, then he argued, pain and disappointment were outstanding characteristics of human existence. —*Baker*.

"The History of the English Novels"

(9)

"Hardy was still more affected by the disintegration of the old ideas. Brought up in a society in which the tradition of mediaeval Christianity had lingered longest, he was indelibly marked by that tradition. His aesthetic sensibility had found its first satisfaction in the ritual of Anglican Church, in the

eloquence of Scripture and the venerable fantasy of the Gothic style. Instinctively, he reverenced the Christian Ideal of virtue ; above all, he took for granted the Christian view of the supreme importance of each individual human being. But there was nothing of the mystic about Hardy. He had no personal sense of a spiritual world to support him against the attacks of rationalist critics on Christian doctrine. His intellect found their arguments unanswerable. By the age of twenty-seven, he had already lost his faith. He did not feel it a dead loss. Such elements in Christian morality as were, in Hardy's view, the cause of suffering—indissoluble marriage, for instance—were, he thought, a good riddance. And he was angry, a little unreasonably, with the clergy and other orthodox persons who felt it their duty to defend them. Like many village people, Hardy was always ready to grumble about the vicar. But, taken as a whole, he felt that the loss to human happiness involved by the new scientific interpretation of life far outweighed the gain".

"A struggle between man on the one hand and, on the other, an omnipotent and indifferent Fate—that is Hardy's interpretation of the human situation. Inevitably, it imposes a pattern on his picture of the human scene. It determines the character of his drama. Like other dramas, this turns on a conflict ; but the conflict is not, as in most novels between one man and another, or between man and an institution. Man in Hardy's books is ranged against impersonal forces, the forces conditioning his fate. Not that his characters themselves are always aware of this. Henchard is obsessed by this hatred of Farfrae ; Bathsheba looks on Troy as the author of her misfortunes. But from the point of vantage from which Hardy surveys their stories, Bathsheba and Henchard are seen to be under a delusion. For those whom they think their enemies are as much as themselves puppets in the hands of Fate. Fate, not them, is ultimately responsible for their quarrels. Unless they were destined to do so, they would not be in conflict with each other. Not that Hardy refuses to make moral distinctions between his characters. On the contrary, his leading figures divide themselves into instruments for good and instruments for evil. The line between them is determined by their attitude to themselves. All

alike are striving for happiness; but whereas Eustacia or Fitzpiers or Arabella strive with selfish passion, Gabriel and Tess and Giles are prepared to sacrifice their own happiness to ensure that of other people. This difference, however, in their characters does not affect the issue. That is in the hands of Fate. And indeed it is significant that Hardy—as a rule—emphasises the fact that even those characters the world would call wicked are so much the creatures of circumstance that they are far more to be pitied than to be blamed. Henchard, for instance, seems, on the face of it, faulty enough violent, vindictive and uncontrolled. From that first chapter in which he sells his wife at the Fair, until the end of the story when he deliberately conceals from Elizabeth Jane the news of her father's arrival, lest she should wish to leave him, he acts in such a way as to justify an old-fashioned orthodox moralist in condemning him as the architect of his own misfortunes. But Hardy does not look at him in this way. Hardy embodies Fate in various forms. Sometimes it appears as a natural force. Henchard's plans for making himself rich are brought to nought by a bad harvest ; the weather plays the part of Fate here. Sometimes, it embodies itself as some innate weakness of character. Jude's life is ruined because he has been endowed at birth, through no wish of his own, with an intensity of sexual temperament which he cannot control, and which is his undoing. Chiefly, however, the forces of Fate in Hardy's novels incarnate themselves in two guises—as chance, and as love. Of these, chance is the most typical. In no other novels does chance exercise such a conspicuous influence on the course of events. Hardy has been blamed for this : and no doubt, he does sometimes overdo it. But to condemn his use of chance altogether is to misunderstand his view of life. We are witnessing a battle between man and Destiny. Destiny is an inscrutable force ; we do not understand its nature or its intentions. And we cannot, therefore predict what it will do. In consequence, its acts always show themselves in the guise of inexplicable, unexpected blows of chance. Mrs. Yeobright calls on a visit of reconciliation with her son at the one moment when, by an unlucky combination of circumstances, Eustacia, his wife,

cannot admit her. In consequence, she goes away to die, unreconciled with him. This is not just a mere clumsy device to make the story end sadly. Hardy is out to show that Mrs. Yeobright and Eustacia in their struggle for happiness, are alike up against the process of the universal plan, which takes no account of their feelings and may therefore, make a move—from pure caprice, it may seem—which renders their efforts vain. Such apparent accidents are really as typical an expression of the nature of Fate as Mrs. Yeobright's wish to make up her quarrel with her son is an expression of her nature." —*David Cecil*

"Hardy the Novelist"

(10)

"A strong characteristic of Hardy is the wide awakeness of his senses to external impressions. An average intelligent observer notes small things and straightway forgets most of them, while the possessor of a highly trained memory retains a greater number in his mind, more or less isolated and disconnected. But an artist of Hardy's power not only absorbs minute details and changes in the world around him, but also links them up with human personality with consummate skill. His ears are open to every slight sound ; he sees (and makes us see) every delicate shade of colour, and he constantly creates the illusion in the reader's mind that he is in the actual spot described. We can see the dust rising up from the hot road way, hear the rain's varying sound as it falls on different crops, mark the twisting and turning of leaves in a breeze, note the cloud closing 'down upon the line of a distant ridge, like an upper upon a lower eyelid, shutting in the gaze of the evening sun. His power of framing vivid and beautiful metaphors and similes has much to do with success in reproducing impressions from without. There are ugly exceptions and occasional illustrations only to be understood by the technician, but for the most part they are telling and give that impression of utter rightness which alone stamps a simile or metaphor with success. This holds good even of the weaker novels as a short passage from *The Hand of*

Ethelberta will exemplify, especially in the last of three metaphors.
—*Professor Grimsditch*

"Character and Environment in the Novels of Thomas Hardy"

(11)

"From his earliest works he tried his hand at the delineation of landscape ; and while he at first added nothing new to the theme, he showed freshness, an accuracy of touch and tone which bespeaks an intimate knowledge of the country. The idyllic scenes in *Far From the Madding Crowd* are worthy of being compared with the most truthful pictures that English prose had yet produced in that line. With *The Return of the Native*, *The Woadlanders*, *Tess*, we come upon effects more powerful and of a rare quality, aimed at with a sure and certain skill. A great poet of nature there freely displays an exceptional gift for description, which owes a vast range to the perception both of fine shades and of vast, solemn harmonies.

"What strikes us first in these pictures is their precision. Hardy has the acute discriminating senses of an observer who takes in things with an attention at the same time analytical and impassioned. His records of impressions owe nothing to literature ; they are wholly direct, and grow out of the object itself ; as they formulate what the most impressionable peasants would subconsciously register, they extend our knowledge at many points. No one before him has caught, or at least expressed through words, the peculiar rustling of the wind in tiny bells of dried weather blossoms. Such extremely delicate perceptions, however, are not so striking as the some broad, strong intuition, in which imagination has its share. The special aspect of particular regions, the picturesque essence of an individual landscape, are seen and rendered with deepest tendencies in the writer's temperament, his tastes are secretly guiding the preferences of his sight. Hardy has most lovingly described the elementary, grand, and sad aspects of nature ; the land which appeals to him most is that which is freest from human dwellings ; he

loves the sea, but does not often describe it, not finding himself sufficiently familiar with its moods ; he loves more to paint the woods, where the seasons go through the infinitely varied circle of rich postures, the sober hills of his native district ; the bare uplands where the furrow of a Roman road runs straight and empty to the horizon ; and the gloomy vastness of the moor in which every living being vanishes as if swallowed up in the depth of the centuries whose image is called up by its immobility." —*Cazamian*

(12)

"Hardy has left a body of fiction unique in its uniformity. Never has a region been so comprisingly celebrated as in these books. And within that world, out of which Hardy stepped timidly and with awkward results, he has created hundreds of characters, many of them mere horal voices in an ale-house and anti-strophe in the classic Greek drama, who live with a close and intimate endearment for generation after generation of readers. Their clothes and manners are becoming somewhat period-dated now, but the people themselves are still warm-blooded ; still capable of infinite suffering and gusty happiness. They dance and sing, eat and drink, work and make love ; and on some occasions, they do more desperate things, such as murder and adultery, and moral cheating. And all this is for ever taking place in a country-side of down-land, seaborder, plashy meadows and creamy farms, where milk and cider flow and the breath of cows in sweet, and lavender is laid in the drawers of old furniture in rooms where man and wife sleep, in beds that their forbears were born in and died in." —*Church*

"The Growth of the English Novel"

(13)

"Coincidence (as when the letter that would have eased the whole tragic situation in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is slipped under the door, and by chance, goes under the carpet and is never found), plays too large a part in these tales. But so it does again in the Greek records of human fate. And so it does too in real life, though the critic should hold no brief

for real life, as a model for art. Hardy's art is a deliberate as well as an instinctive one. He is part of his own Wessex world, one with his people, a child of his country-side. When he leaves it he is quaint and mannered like a farmer come to town in a stiff suit; or perhaps an old country doctor. But back in his own world, all his sagacity, his scholarship, his first-hand knowledge of place and people, of nature and the ineffable over-spirit of time and place, return to inform his art. At its best, as in *The Woodlanders*, one of the most beautiful novels in the English language, that art is almost beyond criticism. Here is a sylvan genius in full display. Within the pages of this book, we smell and hear, touch and see with an intimacy that we take for granted, until we pause to reflect that after all, this amazing experience is a verbal one, a conjuring by the poet who has brought us to these woodlands, these soils and waters, and finally to these few folk or such close, inarticulate relationship with each other and with us who are invited to share their destinies; and such heart-rending destinies. The contact is almost painful. We wake, after the death of Giles Winterbourne, and the final velediction of his love to Marty South, with a start of incredulity not at the story, but at the world around us, and of our own affairs. Which, we ask, is the real world ? And the answer is a long time in coming to our bewitched minds." —*Church*

"Hardy's father was a builder, his mother the daughter of a Dorsetshire small landowner, and the centuries of settled English tradition in Hardy's ancestral record undoubtedly stimulated and sustained his interest in the ancient English Kingdom of Wessex. Hardy's Wessex is much more than a scenic setting for his stories and poems; it is the dominating Over-Character brooding constantly above his works, and casting its changeless shadow upon the author as well as upon the people in his books. He lays reiterated emphasis upon the unaltering aspect of large tracts of Wessex. Egdon Heath is 'a face upon which time makes but little impression' ......'a tract of country unaltered from that sinister condition which made Caesar anxious every year to get clear of its glooms before the autumnal equinox'. The men and women of Hardy's Wessex, though living in the nineteenth century,

are subject to 'curious fetilistic fears' and touched by a 'lumber of superstitions, folk-lore, dialect, and orally transmitted ballads'. The tragedies that fall upon them are often due, in Hardy's interpretation, to the intrusion of modern customs and new habits of mind. Themselves the product of association between the past and the present, these Wessex people are 'harnessed by the irrepressible New'. The decorative veneer of civilisation and progress lies uneasily upon them. Grace Melbury turns upon her father with the cry, 'I wish you had never, never thought of educating me. I wish I worked in the woods like Marty South : I hate genteel life......Cultivation has only brought me inconveniences and troubles.' The timeless, changeless spirit of Wessex speaks in her, revolting against newness and 'cultivation'. For the full significance of Hardy's Wessex to be realised, it must stand in the consciousness as of readers like an eternal Presence, both in the poems and the prose. Wessex was a persistent; and symbolic factor in Hardy's mentality." —*A. C. Ward*

"Twentieth Century Literature"

(14)

"Poetry is the constant attendant of Hardy's tragic characters. It is not an intellectual poetry, like Meredith's ; it is much more primitive and magical, and always it heightens the significance of the characters and the reader's consciousness of their tragic stature. And, as Hardy moves away, as it were, from the norm of prose intention as traditionally conceived, so he moves his novels more and more out of the realm in which they may be criticised from successful tragic novel is *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Henchard is his grandest hero as Tess is his most moving heroine, and much of Henchard's tragic greatness comes from his impercipience. He contains all nature within himself, as a truly great bull might be described as doing. This almost animal impercipience removes him far away from the tragic heroes of Shakespeare ; and yet, in one respect at any rate, it is Macbeth with whom we have to compare him. External nature fights against Henchard, but it is nature interpreted by superstition ; and it is the poetic quality of the whole

that makes the superstition credible. The poetry heightens and deepens our sense of Henchard's tragic fate. Two instances of this poetry may be quoted : the moment when his wedding present to Elizabeth Jane is discovered : 'a new bird-cage, shrouded in newspaper, and at the bottom of the cage a little ball of feathers—the dead body of a gold finch' ; and the scene in which Henchard sees the dead body lying stiff and stark upon the surface of the stream".

—*Walter Allen*

"The English Novel"

(15)

"Of the women, whose characters and fortunes are portrayed by Hardy most various opinions may be held. Some have that winning audacity the charm of strength, which markes in diverse manners those gentle ladies, Captain Keeldar, Sir Julius, and Count von Rosen, the creations of other eminent hands ; some are alternately 'cautelous' and 'temerarious', old words of too exact a meaning to be lost : some have a distant likeness to Miss Austen's great characters, a likeness that takes us by surprise ; some almost incur from Dr. Johnson the charge of flirtation, since he defines a flirt to be, a pert young 'hussey' I cannot think that any one of them is so powerfully conceived and drawn, as are the best of Mr. Hardy's men : but more cleverness, more adroitness and dexterity of wit, more research, have gone to their portraits. An admiration of their versatility in maintaining their consistency, is the sentiment, which they provoke : an amazed awe of the infinite ingenuities, which their sincerity can devise for its protection. 'A very little wit', wrote Swift, 'is valued in a woman, as we are pleased with a few words spoken plain by a parrot.' That is too often the dangerous and ignorant view of woman's wit, entertained by Mr. Hardy's men, with distressing consequences.

"Eustacia, Lucetta, Ethelberta, Bathsheba, Vivietta, Felice, Elfride, and some of the noble names, how admirable is the contrast between these and Anne, Faith, Grace, Elizabeth Jane, Thomasin, Charlotte, Marty South ; upon the one side, all shades and lights of passion, petulance, perversity upon the

other, of reticence, patience, restraint. The violent or ambitious natures are more opulent and prodigal in their demeanours : mood follows mood, they are always in a state of revolution against themselves : the quiet or constant natures are more refined and proud in their bearing ; they suffer, but in silence and with strength. Not one of them all is a copy of any other : but these are the general distinctions to be traced among them." —*Lionel Johnson*

"The Art of Thomas Hardy"

(16)

"He was not a satirist nor an ugly liberal-minded reformer. His inner drama was not found within the beliefs and taboos and customs of the social world of his time. That scene was too confused and chaotic and he looked beyond it to a vaster landscape where man is always alone with his destiny. The idiom of that vaster landscape is tragedy, just as the idiom of the other is comedy. The whole basis of Hardy's visionary imagination is by its nature rightly and inevitably disposed towards tragic themes and occasions. His greatest novels are graphs of suffering and of pity that pity inspires in a generous mind. And really everything else is subordinate to that everything is bent to uncover and irradiate these moments when human pride and stubborn hope break under the strain of what Hardy called 'the plight of being alive'.

"Whether or not one calls this 'gloom' is a matter of personal taste. To my mind, Hardy had a surer grasp of the elements of tragedy than any other English novelist of the last century. He never weakened into pathos, he was not prevented into cruelty, and by the happy circumstance of his origins he drew his inspiration from a tradition rich in imaginative simplicity. The rural scene of his native countryside gave him the ingredients of tragic drama already tinged with the instinctive poetry of the ballad. The folk art and dialect speech of the country-side formed a sort of reservoir of strong natural passions and lyrical expression which had been very little used—except in terms of burlesque—since the Elizabethans. The literature of polite society, even in its transpontine moments, had no direct need of such things.

Hardy by contrast is closely and patently rooted in the speech and song of the peasantry. The glamour of the nomadic real-coat, the pervasive image of the country jail and the small tragedies of dairymaids are so familiar to him as the flavoursome humours of taproom speech. His lifetime spanned the decline and break-up of that strong rural tradition which had conserved so much of our cultural tradition and it is he who has given that tradition its fullest expression. In the last analysis Hardy and Wessex are inseparable."

—*Desmond Hawkins*

"Thomas Hardy"

(17)

"The Wessex novels are almost without exception built solidly round on erotic situation, generally of a highly complicated nature. *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, though incorporating a marriage of two is not a love-story in any important sense but in all the other novels the plot takes its rise from the fact of two or more men loving one woman, or two or more women loving one man, or from a combination of the two varieties of complication. In '*Tess*' we have a simple 'triangle', but in most of the other novels, the arrangement of the people who are united by love relation of one sort or another can only be represented by a figure more like a triangle than a square.

"The world of his novel is by no means a world in which all things can be reduced to obvious law and explained by commonsense. The strange, the unforseen, the inexplicable occur everywhere and always. For instance, coincidence is as important a feature in the lives of Hardy's people as it is in real life. It crops up everywhere, in crisis and passing went. We may be sure there are many occasions when it acts without our seeing it : Hardy let us see it every time.

"Coincidence is so frequent in Hardy that there is some danger of its being regarded as a mannerism, or even as a weak device for bringing about crisis. The method is, however, quite deliberately employed, and is well rooted in Hardy's philosophy. The vast web of existence is hopelessly

inextricable and it is to the privileged few 'that the junction and crossings and inter-weavings of the web become clear and explicable and when the artist records it the result is marvellous in our eyes. Shakespeare lines converge, giving the effect of inevitability ; Hardy's main lines converge, too, but they are constantly cut by other lines, with the result that we have as each such section a touch of that irony so dear to Hardy. His coincidences are not forced—they are always explicable, and sometimes explained ; nor are they so imagining as to be incredible, except in cases like the fall of the tower. The strange coincidence in 'Tess' when she has but that moment severed herself from her seducer, and as she walks on in the sad Sabbath morn of October, a stranger appears suddenly at her side, and paints out slowly in letters of staring vermillion, the menacing declaration, 'They, damnation, slumbereth, not',—placing a comma after each word, as if to give pause while that word was driven well home to the reader's heart, the philosophy of the practice in Hardy's own words can be explained—

'Strange conjunction of circumstances, particularly those of a trivial everyday kind are so frequent in an ordinary life that we grow used to their accountableness......

"His novels are replete with nature and if word-pictures could be hung on walls, a great gallery could be filled with Hardy's nature pieces—large deliberate oil-paintings, delicate water-colours and etchings, whole portfolios and sketches and studies. Indeed, the Hardian tragedy, like the human one, is set amid the all-consoling beauty of the most beautiful of possible words. Matthew Arnold said of Wordsworth that to read one of his longer poems was like a day spent in the country, and the assertion would apply closely to many of the Wessex novels. All the green life beneath the friendly sky of South England lives in their pages. Wordsworth's Lucy was formed by the good influences of nature, Tess also bloomed in the open-air life at the dairy farm. R. L. Stevenson has put upon record the fair and imperishable truth that 'to live out of doors' with the woman a man loves is of all lives the most complete and free ; and no one may straightly say how much of beauty the love of Tess and Angel Clare gains from its environment of green pastures.

"His ear for the sounds of nature is both sensitive and highly trained. The landscape background of the novels, the working life, so faithfully painted in, of men and animals in the country, are of unique richness and importance, and constitute perhaps one-half of the permanent value of Hardy's work. But Hardy's nature description seldom has true impersonalness of the camera. In a majority of cases of the natural scenery shown to us at any point in a story will be found to have an emotional connection with the events happening at that moment—the moaning firs on Egdon, and the dead pool that stared up at Oak after the death of his sheep. As a matter of fact, Hardy's landscape is much more ready to show sympathy with purple in distress then with the happy ones. The underlying principle of this emotional sympathy, and of the particular form it generally takes in Hardy, is suggested by the comment made on certain river noises—'Sounds which a sad man would call moans and a happy man laughter'. When Poorgrass is taking Fanny's body in the waggon to the burial-ground, thick fog comes on, and the trees, after standing awhile 'in an attitude of intendness', began to drop water hollowly upon Fanny's coffin."

—*Duffin*

"Thomas Hardy"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE STORY OF THE *FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD* IN OUTLINE

CHAPTER I

In this chapter we meet both the hero and the heroine of the novel. The hero is Gabriel Oak, a young man of 28 and a bachelor. Gabriel Oak was man of sound judgment and a general good character. He was indifferent to religion. He was a very modest person. By profession he was partly a shepherd and partly a farmer.

One morning he was in a field which sloped to a ridge called Norcombe Hill. He saw a waggon coming down the slope. The waggon was loaded with household goods. On the top sat a young and attractive woman. The waggon stopped and the waggoner ran back some distance in order to find something which had fallen somewhere. The girl, having nothing to do, untied a small mirror from a package and looked at her reflection in it. She seemed to be pleased with her beauty and she blushed. The waggoner returned and the waggon moved on. The girl's action had been noticed by Gabriel Oak. A little later Gabriel Oak overheard a dispute between the waggoner and the turnpike gate-keeper over the amount of the tax to be paid. The amount involved was a two pence. The gate-keeper would not allow the waggon to pass. Gabriel stepped forward and handing over a two pence to the gate-keeper asked him to allow the waggon to pass. The young woman looked at Gabriel but without thanking him asked the waggoner to drive on. When the waggon was gone, Gabriel told the gate-keeper that the young woman, though handsome, suffered from the fault of vanity. This young woman was Bathsheba Everdene, who is the heroine of the story.

CHAPTER II

Gabriel Oak had worked hard from the early years of his life. He had been a bailiff for some time. Before that he had been only a shepherd. Now people called him a farmer. He had leased a small sheep farm of which Norcombe Hill was a portion. He had bought 200 sheep for which, however, he had not yet made full payment.

A few days after the incident of the waggon, Gabriel saw from his shepherd's hut a light at a small distance. It was the time of mid-night and he never expected any one in that lonely place. He walked towards the light and found that it came from a kind of shed. Through a hole he saw the interior of the shed clearly. There were two women and two cows in the shed. One of the cows was sick and the women were talking about her. The younger woman also complained that she had lost her hat. A wind had blown it over the hedge. The elder woman said that they needed some oatmeal as there was no more bran for the cow. The younger woman agreed to ride for it at day-break. Gabriel recognised the younger woman as the woman of the waggon. The women went out of the shed while Gabriel returned to his flock.

CHAPTER III

One night Oak went to sleep in the hut with the ventilators closed and the stove burning as a result of which he fainted. He would have died of suffocation if his faithful dog, George, had not, by making frantic signs, brought a woman to the closed door of the hut. This was the same young woman. She sprinkled water on the face of the unconscious Gabriel and opened the ventilators. Thus she saved his life. He felt very grateful to her and wanted to hold her hand. She told him that he could kiss her if he was thinking of doing so. But he tactlessly replied that that had not been his intention. Thereupon, she snatched away her hand and went away without telling him her name.

CHAPTER IV

The young girl had now begun to haunt the mind of Gabriel. He became more and more interested in her. By making inquiries he learnt that her name was Bathsheba Everdene. Oak decided to make her his wife. Accordingly, one day he went up to the cottage of Mrs. Hurst with whom the young woman was staying. Mrs. Hurst was Bathsheba's aunt. Oak told Mrs. Hurst plainly that he wanted to marry Bathsheba. He asked Mrs. Hurst if Bathsheba had any other young man courting her. Mrs. Hurst said that she had at least a dozen. Bathsheba was at that time not in the house. Disappointed by Mrs. Hurst's answer, Gabriel took leave of her. But he had hardly gone two hundred yards when he heard Bathsheba shouting to him and running after him. Bathsheba told him that she had no lovers courting her. Oak then asked her if she would marry him. But Bathsheba said, 'No'. Oak pleaded his case by offering all kinds of temptations to the young girl but she told him that it was of no use.

CHAPTER V

One day Oak learnt that Bathsheba had gone away from the neighbourhood to a place called Weatherbury about twenty miles off. But Gabriel could not drive out her image from his mind.

A great misfortune now happened in the life of Oak. The younger one of his two dogs one night drove two hundred of his sheep over a precipice. All the sheep were killed. The sheep were not insured. Thus the entire wealth of Gabriel was ruined at a single stroke. All his hard work had come to nothing. But he thanked God that he was not married. Oak had not even paid in full for the sheep. He calculated that the value of what was left to him would be just enough to pay his debts, leaving him a free man with the clothes in which he stood and nothing more.

CHAPTER VI

Oak was now without a job. He went to Casterbridge

in search of employment but he could not find any. Then he decided to go to another place to try his luck. In the course of his journey he arrived at Weatherbury in the middle of night. There he saw a hay-rick on fire. He rushed towards it. He found a number of men collected there. But none knew what to do. The fire was likely to reach the wheat-ricks close by. Oak made desperate efforts to save the wheat-ricks and succeeded in extinguishing the fire with the help of those men. He was astonished to learn that the owner of this property was Bathsheba. Bathsheba had come into the possession of this property as a result of the sudden death of her uncle. He saluted Bathsheba and asked her if she could employ him as a shepherd.

CHAPTER VII

Bathsheba was also much surprised at this unexpected meeting with Oak, but she appointed him as her shepherd. Gabriel was filled with wonder to see that the inexperienced girl whom he had met at Norcombe Hill had developed such self-confidence and qualities of leadership. That night Gabriel also accidentally met a girl called Fanny Robin who seemed to be in some kind of distress.

CHAPTER VIII

There was in the village at Weatherbury a Malthouse where the workmen of Bathsheba often gathered to have a drink. Gabriel, after the incident of the fire that night, went thither in search of a lodging. There he made acquaintance with various workmen of Bathsheba, the men whom he had already met at the site of the fire. The company included Joseph Poorgrass, Henry Fray, Jan Coggan, Mark Clark, Jacob Smallbury etc. The proprietor of the Malthouse was a very aged man. They all welcomed Gabriel. They were all talking at random. Their talk was full of humour. When they were about to disperse, news came that Bathsheba had caught her bailiff stealing and had dismissed him on the spot. A little later another news came. The yougest maid-servant of Bathsheba, named Fanny Robin, had disappeared and Bathsheba was feeling worried about her. That night Oak slept at Coggan's lodging.

Chapter IX

One morning, a gentleman farmer by the name of Mr. Boldwood called at Bathsheba's house. Bathsheba had been busy sorting out a miscellaneous collection of things and was covered with dust. She could not, therefore, meet the visitor. But she learnt that he had come to make inquiries about Fanny Robin in whose welfare he was greatly interested. She also learnt that Mr. Boldwood was a confirmed bachelor.

Chapter X

The next day, Bathsheba met all her workmen at her house and paid them their wages. She paid each of them ten shilling extra as a present. She told them that she would not employ any new bailiff but would supervise the work herself. Information was also received at this stage that Fanny Robin had run away with a soldier.

Chapter XI

Fanny Robin had fallen in love with a soldier, Sergeant Troy. This soldier had seduced Fanny after giving her assurances that he would marry her. At a late hour one evening Fanny went to the military barracks where Sergeant Troy was quartered. She threw several lumps of stones at a window whereupon a soldier looked out of the window. This was Sergeant Troy. Fanny asked him in a soft voice when he would marry her. But he gave a vague reply saying that he would marry her soon. Fanny began to cry. The man tried to console her from above. A little later Fanny walked away.

Chapter XII

In pursuance of her resolution to take charge of her business in her own hands, Bathsheba made her appearance in the corn-market of Casterbridge on the following market date. Everybody was filled with surprise and admiration for the beauty and self-confidence of this farmer-woman. Bathsheba was aware of the effect that she had produced.

Everybody stared at her with the exception of one man who was absolutely and utterly indifferent to her. This was Mr. Boldwood. Bathsheba's vanity was somewhat injured by the indifference of this man.

CHAPTER XIII

One day, Bathsheba wanted to send a valentine to a boy, Teddy Coggan. Her maid-servant Liddy proposed that the valentine be sent to Farmer Boldwood. Under Liddy's pressure Bathsheba agreed. She sealed the letter with the words: "Marry me". The valentine was posted to Boldwood. This action was performed in a most thoughtless manner.

CHAPTER XIV

When Boldwood received the letter next day, being St. Valentine's Day, he was astonished to read the words of the seal: "Marry me". Boldwood was a very serious-minded and sober type of man, but this strange letter stirred him to the depths. He tried to imagine who the writer of this letter could be and what could be her motive in writing it. The same day the postman delivered another letter to Boldwood. It was addressed to the new shepherd at Weatherbury. Obviously it was meant for Gabriel Oak. Boldwood decided to contact Oak and deliver this letter to him. Boldwood had another motive also in meeting Oak. He wanted to ask if Gabriel recognised the handwriting on the anonymous letter which Boldwood had received.

CHAPTER XV

Boldwood contacted Gabriel Oak at the Malthouse and delivered Oak's letter to him. After reading it, Oak showed the contents to Boldwood. The letter was from Fanny Robin. She said that she was going to marry Sergeant Troy. Boldwood, however, expressed a doubt whether Sergeant Troy would ever marry Fanny. A little later Boldwood showed his own letter to Gabriel and asked him if he could recognise the handwriting. Oak told him that it was Bathsheba's handwriting.

Chapter XVI

As we have seen above, Sergeant Troy had given a promise to marry Fanny Robin. He was not very particular to marry her but as the girl had been making pathetic appeals to him, he decided to marry her. Accordingly, he fixed a date with the girl and asked her to meet him punctually at 11 a.m. at a Church called All Saint's where, he said, he would marry her. On the appointed day, Sergeant Troy arrived at the specified church. One hour passed but Fanny did not turn up. Sergeant Troy went out of the church and saw Fanny coming. She told him that by mistake she had gone to another church called 'All Souls'. She asked him when he would marry her now. But the Seageant brushed her aside and said that God alone knew. Fanny had thought her own mistake missed the opportunity to marry Sergeant Troy.

Chapter XVII

On Saturday, Boldwood attended the Casterbridge market as usual. This time he was all eyes for Bathsheba. He could not take his eyes off her. Bathsheba became conscious that she had aroused Boldwood's feelings. This was a triumph for her vanity. But she felt sorry to have disturbed the peace of mind of such a respectable and serious-minded person.

Chapter XVIII

Boldwood was now wholly possessed by the thought of Bathsheba. The valentine had produced a tremendous effect upon him. He was now full of a genuine lover's love for her. Meanwhile, remembering the letter which Boldwood had shown to Gabriel, Gabriel suspected that Bathsheba had played some coquettish trick upon Boldwood. A few days later, Boldwood went into the meadow where he saw Bathsheba. He went towards her but felt too shy and too doubtful to speak to her.

Chapter XIX

Boldwood did ultimately muster courage to meet Bath-

sheba. He found her at sheep-washing pool and spoke to her. He told her that ever since he had seen her he had lost control over himself. He asked her to marry him because without her his life would be a burden and a misery. At first Bathsheba totally refused but Boldwood went on pleading his case with such earnestness and sincerity that she asked for time to think over the matter.

CHAPTER XX

At home Bathsheba thought over Boldwood's offer of marriage. She found that she did not want him as a husband. The next day Gabriel told her that her workmen were already speculating about her marriage to Boldwood. He also told Bathsheba that her conduct was unworthy of any decent woman, because she had played some mischievous trick upon Boldwood merely as a pastime. Bathsheba became furious with Gabriel and gave him notice to leave her service at the end of the week. But Gabriel said that he would leave immediately.

CHAPTER XXI

Twenty-four hours after the dismissal of Gabriel Oak, on Sunday afternoon, Bathsheba received the alarming news that about 60 or 70 of her sheep had burst into a field of young clover and had poisoned themselves. Bathsheba rushed to the place and found the sheep unconscious. She learnt that the sheep could be saved only through an operation to let out blood. She was also told that only Gabriel Oak could perform that operation. Seeing the miserable condition of the sheep, Bathsheba was compelled to send for Gabriel Oak who came and saved the sheep by performing operations upon them. Gabriel Oak was reappointed Bathsheba's shepherd.

CHAPTER XXII

The sheep-shearing season arrived. All the men of Bathsheba were busy shearing the sheep in the great Barn. Bathsheba was present, carefully watching the men to see that there was no cutting or wounding the animals through carelessness. She complimented Gabriel upon his speedy and correct fleecing of the sheep. Just at that time Boldwood

appeared. He spoke to Bathsheba in a whisper. A little later Bathsheba went out with Boldwood. The men began to indulge in speculations regarding Bathsheba's marriage to Boldwood.

Chapter XXIII

At the end of the shearing, a shearing-supper was held by Bathsheba. Boldwood also came to this function. After supper there was some singing. Bathsheba also sang. Then Bathsheba and Boldwood withdrew from amongst the guests. When alone, Boldwood again told Bathsheba that he was madly in love with her and that he wanted to marry her. Bathsheba again promised to think over the proposal. Boldwood said that he was going out of Weatherbury for five or six weeks and expressed the hope that on his return Bathsheba would agree to marry him.

Chapter XXIV

That very night, Bathsheba accidentally met a soldier in the fir plantation close to her house. The military man's spur became entangled in Bathsheba's skirt. In the course of disentangling the soldier saw Bathsheba's face and praised her for her beauty. He told her that he was Sergeant Troy. When indoors, Bathsheba asked Liddy if she knew who Sergeant Troy was. Liddy said that by name he was the son of a doctor but that in actual fact he was the illegitimate son of a lord. Bathsheba thought of her accidental meeting with the man. His praise of her beauty had tickled her vanity.

Chapters XXV and XXVI

Sergeant Troy was a happy-go lucky man. He was impulsive by nature. He was well educated and brilliant in talk. He had a wonderful power of flattering women. He had come to Weatherbury for a brief stay. Some days after his accidental meeting with Bathsheba in the fir plantation, he met her in the hay-field and introduced himself. He called her the queen of the corn-market. Bathsheba tried to look indifferent to him but his flattery was irresistible. In the

course of the talk he found an opportunity to thrust his gold-watch into her hands. He said that he wanted her to accept it as a gift. When he had gone, Bashsheba's heart was filled with perplexed excitement. She was not certain how much of his praise the Sergeant had sincerely expressed and how much of it was idle talk.

Chapter XXVII

One day Bathsheba was about to climb up a tree with the help of a ladder in order to hive the bees, when Sergeant Troy approached her. He offered to hive the bees for her. She allowed him to do so. At the end of his operations, he casually remarked that this work was more tiring than a week of sword-exercise. Bathsheba said that she had never seen sword-exercise. He prevailed upon her to meet him at a retired spot amid the ferns where he would give her a demonstration of sword-play.

Chapter XXVIII

At the fixed time Bathsheba went to the appointed place. Troy gave her a most amazing demonstration of his skill with the sword. She was swept off her feet by Troy's extraodinary skill. At the end of the demonstration he kissed her and went away. Her heart was overcome by a flood of emotion.

Chapter XXIX

Gabriel had become aware of Bathsheba's passion for Sergeant Troy. He knew that Sergeant Troy was a wicked man. So one day he spoke to Bathsheba about it. He warned her that the consquences of her newly conceived passion for Sergeant Troy would be most unpleasant. But Bathsheba felt greatly annoyed with Gabriel for speaking ill of Troy.

Chapter XXX

The same evening Bathsheba met Troy again. He

kissed her a second time. When Bathsheba returnd to her house, she overheard her maid-servants talking ill of Troy. She scolded them all. In the privacy of her own room, she told her servant-companion, Liddy, that she was wildly and madly in love with Troy. She also wrote a letter to Boldwood saying that she had thought over his proposal and that she could not marry him.

CHAPTER XXXI

The next evening Bathsheba set out for Yalbury Hill where she had promised to spend a day or two with Liddy and Liddy's aunt. On the way, however, she met Boldwood. Boldwood had received her letter. He pleaded to Bathsheba for mercy. He said that he could not live without her. But Bathsheba told him that she could not marry him. Thereupon Boldwood said that she was a fool to be attracted by the superficial glitter of Sergeant Troy. On learning that Sergeant Troy had kissed Bathsheba, Boldwood uttered curses on the Sergeant and said in a furious mood that he would teach that man a lesson. Bathsheba was frightened by his threat.

CHAPTER XXXII

Instead of continuing her journey to Yalbury Hill, Bathsheba formed another plan. She decided to go to Troy who had gone for a few days to the city of Bath. She wanted to warn him of the danger. In fact she made up her mind to bid Sergeant Troy a final farewell and to ask him to see her no more. But she did not wish to tell anyone of this plan. So she returned to her house stealthily and hitching the horse to her small carriage, drove away. The sounds produced by the horse were, however, heard by the servants. It was thought that some gypsy thief had stolen the horse. Gabriel and Coggan set out in pursuit. But on overtaking the carriage they found that it was Bathsheba and no thief. Bathsheba sent away the pursuers after telling them that she was going to Bath on urgent business.

CHAPTER XXXIII

A couple of weeks passed, but Bathsheba did not return from Bath. In the meantime Cainy Ball who had gone to Bath to enjoy a holiday returned to Weatherbury. He brought the news that he had seen Bathsheba and Sergeant Troy walking about in a park arm-in-arm like a pair of lovers. Gabriel felt upset by this news.

CHAPTER XXXIV

The same evening Bathsheba returned from Bath. Boldwood tried to see her but she refused to meet him. On his way back to his house, Boldwood saw Troy getting down from the carrier's van. Boldwood met the Sergeant and urged him to marry Fanny Robin, saying that he would give him a considerable amount of money if Troy acted upon his advice. He actually handed over to Troy an amount of fifty pounds. But Troy told him that Bathsheba had already surrendered her chastity to him. Thereupon Boldwood was filled with anxiety about Bathsheba. Now he urged the Sergeant not to think of Fanny but to marry Bathsheba. He handed some more money to Troy, appealing to him not to desert Bathsheba. Troy then took Boldwood to Bathsheba's house where he privately showed Boldwood a newspaper which contained an announcement of Troy's marriage to Bathsheba which had already taken place at Bath. Troy began to laugh in mockery. Boldwood felt enraged and threatened to punish Troy. Throughout that night Boldwood kept wandering restlessly over hills, a most unhappy person.

CHAPTER XXXV

Early next morning Gabriel Oak and Coggan passed the house of their mistress, Bathsheba. They saw a handsome man leaning idly from the window. It was Sergeant Troy. The two men at once understood that Bathsheba had married Sergeant Troy. The Sergeant spoke to them cheerfully and said that he would continue to be on friendly terms with them because he was not a proud man.

Chapter XXXVI

It was the end of August. Bathsheba's marriage to Troy was still a recent affair. One night Sergeant Troy gave to the workmen a supper-and-dance party to mark the completion of harvesting. Everybody was in a merry mood. But Gabriel saw signs of approaching rain and storm. Bathsheba's ricks of corn were unprotected against rain. Gabriel tried to warn Troy of the danger to the ricks. But Troy paid no attention. As Gabriel was sincerely devoted to Bathsheba, he resolved to save the ricks somehow. By this time all the men were lying unconscious on account of the strong liquor to which Sergeant Troy had been treating them. Troy himself was also heavily drunk. Garbriel had, therefore, to work single-handed upon the ricks.

Chapter XXXVII

Gabriel was working upon the ricks at great personal risk on account of the danger of lightning. Just then Bathsheba came. She had been feeling worried about the safety of her ricks. She was surprised to see Gabriel working alone to save the ricks from damage. She felt very grateful to him. She tried to render whatever assistance she could. She also talked to him about that night when she had gone to Bath and said that she had actually gone there not with the intention of marrying Troy but to bid farewell to Troy. She explained that at Bath she had felt compelled to marry Troy because he had told her that he had seen a more beautiful woman than Bathsheba.

Chapter XXXVIII

All night Gabriel had worked at the ricks. When the work was completed, it was morning. On his way home he met Boldwood and asked him if the latter had taken all the necessary precautions against rain. But Boldwood had not paid the least attention to his ricks which were all exposed to danger. Boldwood had been feeling so sad as a result of his disapponintment in love for Bathsheba that he was neglecting his duties as a farmer. Accordingly when a heavy downpour of rain followed, much of Boldwood's corn was ruined.

Chapter XXXIX

On Saturday evening in the month of October, Bathsheba and her husband Troy were returning from Casterbridge to Weatherbury. Sergeant Troy had by now got himself discharged from the army and had become a farmer. He told Bathsheba of his losses at horse races. Bathsheba was much distressed by Troy's habit of gambling at the races. She appealed him not to go to the races again but her appeal merely irritated the Sergeant. Just then they saw a woman collapsing on the road-side. Troy instantly recognised the woman as Fanny Robin. Asking Bathsheba to drive on, he rushed towards Fanny. He whispered into her ear that he would meet her on Monday morning at 10 o'clock on Grey's Bridge. Afterwards Bathsheba asked him who the woman was, but he put her off.

Chapter XL

Fanny's condition had become critical. After Troy's desertion, she had tried to earn her living somehow. Having been seduced by Troy she had become pregnant and her pregnancy was now far advanced. She expected no help from any quarter. Therefore, she had decided to go to Casterbridge Union House which was a charitable institution. Having no money, Fanny had to walk all the distance. But the exertion was too great for her. She collapsed on the road-side several times. Ultimately she arrvied at the Union House, leaning upon a dog.

Chapter XLI

Troy had promised to meet Fanny on Monday morning. He wanted to give her financial help and whatever other help she needed. He took twenty pounds from Bathsheba who thought that he wanted to stake the money on races. It so happened that he opened the case at the back of his watch. Bathsheba noticed a small curl of yellow hair in it. She insisted on knowing whose hair it was. He told her that it was the hair of a young woman whom he had wanted to marry before he met Bathsheba. Bathsheba was stung by jealousy but Troy left her in that mood and she burst into great sobs.

The next morning she learnt that Fanny Robin had died and that Boldwood was making arrangements to have the dead body brought to Weatherbury for burial. Bathsheba thought it primarily her duty to make arrangements for the burial because Fanny had been her servent. So she directed Joseph Poorgrass to go with a waggon and to bring Fanny Robin's dead body from the Casterbridge Union House. She also learnt at this time that the colour of Fanny Robin's hair was yellow. She now understood that Fanny Robin's faithless lover had been no other man but Troy. She also understood that the woman whom Troy had tried to help on the road-side had been no other than Fanny. She felt heart-broken to learn that before Troy married her, he had had a love affair with Fanny.

CHAPTER XLII

As directed, Joseph Poorgrass got Fanny's coffin from the Casterbridge Union House and placing it in the waggon started his drive towards Weatherbury. There was a thick fog in the air that afternoon and the road passed through a thick wood. Joseph Poorgrass felt lonely and depressed. When, therefore, he arrived at an inn on the road-side, he halted and went in for a drink. Inside the inn he met Jan Coggan and Mark Clark. He started drinking in their company and was considerably delayed. Just then Gabriel entered and scolded all three of them for their conduct. Gabriel then himself drove the waggon with Fanny's coffin to Weatherbury. When he arrived in Weatherbury, it was too late for the burial. The coffin was, therefore, placed inside Bathsheba's house for the night.

CHAPTER XLIII

The same night Liddy told Bathsheba that there was a rumour that the coffin contained not noly the body of Fanny but also of her dead child. Bathsheba had already come to the conclusion that a love affair had existed between Fanny and Troy. The rumour brought by Liddy added seriousness to the situation. This meant that Troy had seduced Fanny and that Fanny had become pregnant. She felt very distress-

ed. In order to verify the rumour, she opened the coffin. She saw the dead body of the child along with the mother. Tears fell fast from Bathsheba's eyes now. She also saw the yellow hair of Fanny. A few moments later, Troy stepped into the room. When he saw the coffin with Fanny's dead body in it, he was stunned. He had gone to Grey's Bridge in order to keep his appointment with Fanny and was not aware that Fanny was already dead. He was filled with remorse and repentance. He bent over Fanny's dead body and kissed her. Bathsheba's jealousy was now intensified. She asked Troy not to kiss Fanny. But Troy pushed Bathsheba away and said that, in the eyes of heaven Fanny was his true wife, not Bathsheba. On hearing these words, Bathsheba felt crazy with grief and ran out of the house.

CHAPTER XLIV

Bathsheba spent that night in a wood. But in the morning she realised that there was no place for a run-away wife to go to. Liddy came in search of her and she went back to her house. Fanny's coffin had already been removed to the graveyard.

CHAPTER XLV

Troy had been greatly upset by Fanny's tragic end. He wanted to make whatever amends he could to the dead Fanny. So he went to Casterbridge and ordered a tombstone for Fanny's grave. The words inscribed on the tombstone were: "Erected by Francis Troy in beloved memory of Fanny Robin". The tombstone was duly put up on the grave of Fanny. Troy also planted flowers on Fanny's grave.

CHAPTER XLVI

The flowers planted by Troy on Fanny's grave were washed off during the night by a stream of water flowing from one of the gurgoyles of the church building. When Troy saw that in the morning, he felt much grief. He departed from Weatherbury, without any definite destination in mind. He was now in no mood to live with Bathsheba.

A little after Troy's departure, Bathsheba decided to visit the church-yard at Liddy's suggestion, to see Fanny's grave. There Bathsheba received another shock when she saw the tombstone erected on the grave by her husband.

CHAPTER XLVII

In the course of his aimless walk, Troy reached the seashore. There he felt like having a swim in the ocean. He plunged into the sea but an unexpected current carried him off far into the sea. He would have been drowned but for a ship's boat which picked him up. The sailors, however, could not land him back upon the sea-shore just at that time. His garments, therefore, were picked up by some one and his identity discovered from his watch and other articles. He was presumed to have been drowned.

CHAPTER XLVIII

The information regarding Troy's drowning was conveyed to Bathsheba. She was at that time in Casterbridge market. On hearing the information, she fainted and was carried by Boldwood to an inn, from where, on recovering, she drove to her house.

CHAPTER XLIX

It was late autumn. Bathsheba, finding it impossible to look after her business any longer, appointed Oak as her bailiff. Boldwood also found that he had no heart for his work. He too gave the charge of his farm to Oak on a share basis. At the same time a new hope was born in Boldwood's heart. He thought that now at last Bathsheba might marry him.

CHAPTER L

Summer had now come. Bathsheba and Boldwood attended the annual sheep fair on Greenhill, little distance away from Weatherbury. A circus was giving shows at the fair. One of the items in the programme was "Turpin's Ride to York". This performance was being given by Troy.

Troy had not been drowned. He had sailed to the U.S.A. where he earned his living by giving lessons in sword-exercise, fencing and boxing. Then he had returned to England. He could not make up his mind to return to Bathsheba bacause he did not know how she would receive him. Therefore, he was earning his livelihood as a hired performer at the circus. Bathsheba witnessed the performance, but Troy had disguised himself in such a way that she did not have the least idea of his identity. Pennyways, Bathsheba's dismissed bailiff, had, however, recognised Troy. He wrote down a message informing Bathsheba that her husband was there, still alive. But before Bathsheba could read that note, Troy snatched it away from her hands through a hole that he had made in the canvas wall of the tent in which she sat.

CHAPTER LI

When Bathsheba drove back to Weatherbury from the sheep fair, Boldwood rode by her side. One the way he pressed her hard to give him a promise that she would marry him some day. She said that she was not certain of Troy's death. In the absence of a definite proof of her husband's death, the law required her to wait for seven years before remarrying. Boldwood was prepared to wait all these years if she would just give him a promise. Bathsheba, under his pressure, said that she would give him a definite answer at Christmas time which was not very far.

CHAPTERS LII, LIII AND LIV

Christmas eve came. Boldwood had arranged a lavish party to celebrate the occasion. He was expecting Bathsheba to give him a definite promise of marriage that night. Bathsheba went to the party unwillingly. There Boldwood spoke to her privately and urged her to give him a promise that she would marry him at the end of seven years from the date on which Troy had disappeared. He pressed her so hard that she was compelled to give him the desired promise. But about half an hour later, Troy burst into the hall. Everybody was astonished to see him. Bathsheba was stunned and, being unable to stand the shock, she sat down

on the stairs. Troy told her that he had come to take her away but she kept quiet. Troy then asked her to accompany him without any more waste of time. She still did not move. Thereupon, Boldwood called out to Bathsheba and advised her to go home with her husband. Bathsheba still sat motionless, as if lost in a dream. Then Troy caught her by the arm and tried to pull her. She gave a scream as if he had hurt her. At this stage Boldwood, picking up a gun which lay near, fired a shot at Troy and killed him. Then he tried to kill himself but was prevented from doing so by the men. He then rushed out of his house and vanished in the darkness. Bathsheba's grief was intense. She could hardly understand what had happened. She blamed herself for the tragedy. She had the body of Troy carried to her house where she removed Troy's garments and dressed him in grave-clothes. By this time Oak had brought a surgeon from Casterbridge. Bathsheba was now having hysteric fits. The surgeon, therefore, attended to her. It was decided to bury the body of Troy the next morning.

Chapter LV

Boldwood had gone straight to Casterbridge and had surrendered himself to the police. After a couple of months, his trial took place and he was sentenced to death. But a petition for mercy was sent on his behalf to the Home Secretary on the ground that Boldwood had not been in his right mind. Evidence had come to light after the trial that Boldwood had been insane for several months. The petition was based upon this evidence. As a result of the petition, the death penalty was commuted to imprisonment during Her Majesty's pleasure.

Chapter LVI and LVII

Spring came and passed and then summer came. Bathsheba had got Troy's body buried in the same grave in which Fanny lay. She had following words added to the inscription on Fanny's tomb-stone: "In the same grave lie the remains of Francis Troy who died on December 24, 18—, aged 26 years."

Gabriel Oak had now become very indifferent to Bathsheba. He avoided meeting her. The reason was that people had begun to talk unkind things about him. People had begun to say that he was waiting to take possession of Boldwood's farm and then to marry Bathsheba. He did not want that there should be any scandal about Bathsheba and himself. Therefore, he wrote a letter to Bathsheba saying that he could not continue to supervise her farm. He had decided to look after Boldwood's farm only so that his name should not be linked with Bathsheba and so that a scandal should be avoided. But Bathsheba felt that she would not be able to run the farm witout Gabriel. Gabriel had become indispensable to her. So she went to Gabriel's house in order to press him to stay on. When she learnt the reasons for Gabriel's decision, she said that she did not feel convinced of the rightness of his decision. He then asked her if it was possible for him to court her and to win her as a wife. Her answer was encouraging. Soon the two got married. Thus came about the union of Bathsheba with a man who had been her very first lover and who had served her loyally and loved her truly for a long time.

———

CHAPTER XIX

2—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON *THE FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD*

Q. 1. *Relate the circumstances of Bathsheba's meeting with Troy and her marriage to him.*

Ans. *Meeting in the fir plantation* : One night Bathsheba, before retiring to bed, went on her usual round with a lentern to inspect the buildings, etc. Her way back to the house was by a path through a plantation of fir trees growing thickly together. Going through the plantation, she heard the footsteps of somebody coming from the opposite direction. The two were about to pass each other when something tugged at her skirt and pinned it forcibly to the ground. Bathsheba was almost thrown off her balance. In trying to recover her balance, she struck against warm clothes and brass buttons. It was a soldier. His spur had become entangled in Bathsheba's skirt. Efforts at unfastening did not bear immediate fruit. In the course of these efforts, the soldier complimented the woman on the beauty of her face. Bathsheba scolded him for his remarks but he went on to praise her more and more. His manner of flattering her was so accomplished and clever that her vanity was tickled. He told her that he was Sergeant Troy. At last when Bathsheba was released from the entanglement, she ran away.

Her vanity is tickled : Indoors Bathsheba wondered whether she was justified in feeling offended with the Sergeant just because he had praised her beauty. In fact the flattering remarks he had made gave her much pleasure.

More flattery : Some days later Sergeant Troy went into the hay-fields to make hay for fun. Bathsheba was there. As soon as Troy saw her, he went towards her. Seeing him, she blushed partly with anger and partly with

embarrassment. The Sergeant saluted her and said that he did not know that the other night he was speaking to Miss Everdene, the queen of the corn-market. He said he wished to be foregiven for having expressed his feelings too strongly that night. Bathsheba replied to him rather indifferently, whereupon the Sergeant said that it was very strange that she should feel offended with him just because he had honestly told her that she was beautiful. Bathsheba tried to assume an attitude of scorn. The Sergeant said that he would rather have curses from her than kisses from any other woman. In this way the Sergeant went on flattering Bathsheba and paying compliments to her most skilfully till Bathsheba inwardly melted towards him. He called her the most fascinating, the most charming woman he had ever seen. He also said that he was going to stay in Weatherbury for a few days and that he hoped that she would not mind his talking to her sometimes. Bathsheba wanted to go away from him now and asked him what time it was. Finding that she had no watch, Sergeant Troy thrust his own gold watch into her hands and said that she must keep it as a gift from him. Bathsheba did not wish to accept the watch but his insistance could not be resisted. He then wished her good-bye and walked away.

The sword-play : Bathsheba's heart was full of excitement because of the things that Troy had said to her. There was no doubt that she had begun to feel a kind of passion for this dashing young man. He met her again when she was going to hive the bees. He offered to do the work of hiving the bees for her and she allowed him to do it. In the course of talk he made a reference to sword exercise. Bathsheba said that she had heard about it but she had never seen it. He then told her to meet him at a place amid the ferns in the evening when he would give her a demonstration of sword exercise. Bathsheba went at the appointed hour. He gave her a most skilful and most remarkable demonstration of sword-play. Bathsheba was simply fascinated. At the end of the demonstration, he suddenly kissed her and she did not protest.

Boldwood's threat : Bathsheba was now madly in love with Troy. When, however, Boldwood learnt of Bathsheba's

passion for Troy, he felt enraged. It meant that Bathsheba would not marry him now. In fact Bathsheba wrote to him saying that she could not marry him. He, therefore, met Bathsheba and after pleading his case said that she seemed to have changed her mind about him after meeting Troy. He said that he would punish the man who had robbed him of her. Bathsheba felt alarmed about the safety of her lover Troy. Fortunately Troy was not in Weatherbury at that time. He had gone to the city of Bath to see a few friends. Bathsheba made up her mind to go to Bath in order to warn Troy of the danger. In fact she decided to go to Troy and break off all connection with him in order not to get into complications.

Bathsheba marries Troy : Accordingly, Bathsheba drove Bath and met Troy. She was now overcome by the fear that a scandal might arise and injure her good name. She wanted to bid final farewell to Troy. But Troy was a trickster. He told her that if she did not marry him at once, he might turn to another woman who was even more beautiful. Bathsheba was stunned by jealousy. She was now on the horns of a dilemma. In her heart were mingled the feelings of love, jealousy and fear. But love overcame fear. She yielded to Troy's pressure and she married him.

Q. 2. *Tell the story of Fanny Robin and the circumstances of her tragic end. What was the effect of her death on the life of Bathsheba* ?

Ans. *Fanny's lover & her running away from Bathsheba*: Fanny Robin was the youngest maid-servant of Bathsheba. Before Bathsheba took charge of her uncle's farm, Fanny Robin had been employed by Bathsheba's uncle at the recommendation of Farmer Boldwood who had acted, more or less, as Fanny's guardian. One night when Gabriel Oak had arrived in Weatherbury, Fanny Robin was found missing from the house. Bathsheba felt worried and asked her men to get whatever information they could. One of the men said that Fanny had a lover, a soldier quartered at Casterbridge. Bathsheba asked this man to go to Casterbridge and make inquiries. The man returned from Casterbridge with the information that the regiment to which that soldier belonged

had been shifted from Casterbridge and Fanny seemed to have gone with her lover.

Fanny's hope : The fact was that Fanny had somehow met Sergeant Troy. A love affair had developed. As Fanny was very trusting and simple-minded, Troy had seduced her without much difficulty after promising to marry her. That was the reason why Fanny had left her job without telling anybody whither she was going. She was hopeful that Troy would marry her. But Troy kept postponing the marriage.

Fanny's visit to Troy : One night Fanny went to the barracks at the military station where Troy's regiment was quartered. She had a brief conversation with Troy who spoke to her from the window above. Fanny asked him when he would marry her. But the Sergeant tried to put her off. Fanny began to cry and the Sergeant tried to soothe her. He told her that he could not come down because the barrack gates were closed and the bugle had already sounded. Thereupon Fanny went away.

Fanny's error : Troy did ultimately agree to marry Fanny. He fixed a date with her and asked her to reach a church called 'All Saints' punctually at 11 o'clock. Troy reached there but Fanny did not arrive. When Troy was leaving the church, he saw Fanny coming. The hour of the marriage had passed. Fanny had by mistake gone to another church called 'All Souls'. Thus Fanny missed the chance of marrying Troy. She suggested that they could get married the following day. But Troy tried to put her off.

Troy's meeting with Bathsheba : Troy might still have married Fanny if he had not accidentally met Bathsheba. He was captivated by Bathsheba's beauty. He, therefore, lost contact with Fanny and in fact avoided her. Troy married Bathsheba while Fanny's condition became more and more miserable. She was pregnant. She tried to earn her living somehow at a place called Melchester. When the time of delivery approached, Fanny was miserable because she was penniless. She, therefore, decided to go to Casterbridge Union House which was a charitable institution. She had to walk the distance because she had no money. The distance was several miles long. By the time Fanny reached her destina-

tion, she was already half-dead. She died after giving birth to a child. The child also died.

The effect of Fanny's death on Bathsheba's life : Fanny's death had disastrous consequences for Bathsheba's. When Fanny's coffin lay in Bathsheba's house, Bathsheba learnt that Fanny's dead child was also in the coffin. She opened the coffin and saw the child. She also saw the yellow hair of Fanny in the coffin. She was now convinced that Fanny had been seduced by Troy. Just at that time Troy arrived and seeing the dead body of Fanny was overcome by grief. He kissed the dead Fanny and said that in heaven's eyes Fanny was his true wife, not Bathsheba. In fact he pushed away Bathsheba from him. He also erected a tomb-stone at Fanny's grave with an inscription on it. Not only that, he planted flowers on the grave. Then he left Weatherbury. The death of Fanny had affected this man so deeply that he no longer wanted to live with Bathsheba. He did return to her several months later, but was shot dead by Boldwood when Boldwood saw him using force with Bathsheba. Thus the death of Fanny led to Troy's separation from Bathsheba.. Fanny's death, indeed, brought a tragedy into the life of Bathsheba.

Q. 3. *Write an account of the circumstances that led to Troy's estrangement from Bathsheba* ?

Ans. *Troy's drunkenness* : The first circumstance that caused a disillusionment in Bathsheba's mind about Troy was the latter's drunkenness on the occasion of the sharing supper-and-dance. Troy made the workmen also drunk, with the result that when the rain came, Gabriel Oak had to work single-handed for the protection of Bathsheba's wheat and barley ricks. Bathsheba was that night much distressed to find her husband so utterly indifferent to her property.

Troy's gambling : The next circumstances which greatly upset Bathsheba was Troy's losses at horse-races. She had not known that Troy was a gambler. She appealed him not to go to the races but her appeal merely irritated the Sergeant. Troy went so far as to say that if he had known that she was so narrow-minded, he would not have married her. He complained that she seemed to have lost all the

pluck which he had formerly found in her. He called her a chicken-hearted creature.

Bathsheba's suspicion : Another factor leading to a misunderstanding between husband and wife was Fanny's collapsing on the road-side and Sergeant Troy's helping the miserable woman. Troy and Bathsheba were returning to their house by carriage when this incident occurred. Troy instantly recognised Fanny and urged Bathsheba to drive on while he stayed back for a few moments to console Fanny. He hurriedly gave her some money and promised to meet her the following Monday at Grey's Bridge outside the town of Casterbridge. When Troy rejoined his wife a little later, she asked him if he knew who the woman was. Troy said that he knew her only by sight. Bathsheba remarked that he seemed to know her well. Troy answered that he did not care what Bathsheba thought about the matter. This incident created some sort of suspicion in Bathsheba's mind.

Suspicion confirmed : The suspicion that had been created in Bathsheba's mind by the above incident was confirmed when a couple of days later Bathsheba happened to see a small curl of yellow hair in the case at the back of Troy's watch. Bathsheba insisted on knowing whose hair it was. Troy said that it was the hair of a young woman whom he had wanted to marry before he met Bathsheba. He also said that her hair had been admired by everybody and that it was beautiful hair. Bathsheba was naturally filled with jealousy. She told him that she had given him all her love and that he was giving her a poor return for her sincerity and devotion. Troy, thereupon, became indignant and said that he had made a mistake by marrying Bathsheba. He said that he had never looked at that lock of hair till that very day and that he had been reminded of the hair by his meeting with that woman on the roadside a couple of days ago. Bathsheba asked what exactly was the relationship between him and that woman. But Troy asked her not to bother him and then went out of the house. After he had gone, Bathsheba burst into great sobs. Her pride had been brought low by the discovery that her husband had been in love with another woman while she had kept herself pure before marriage. She now wished that she could go back to that

maidenly existence. She even wondered what her life would have been if she had married Gabriel Oak or the farmer Boldwood. Bathsheba soon learnt that the woman whom Troy had tried to help on the roadside was no other than Fanny Robin. She further learnt that Fanny's hair was yellow. She now understood that a love-affair had existed between her husband and Fanny Robin. This realisation was most painful to her.

Fanny's dead body : But the climax came when Troy found the dead body of Fanny Robin and her child in the coffin inside Bathsheba's house. He bent over Fanny's body and kissed her. Bathsheba's jealousy was now unbearably intense. She asked Troy not to kiss Fanny but to kiss her. Troy pushed her away and said that in the eyes of Heaven, Fanny was his true wife, not Bathsheba. On hearing these words, Bathsheba felt wild with grief and ran out of the house. She spent the night in a wood. Next day she learnt that Troy had put up a tombstone on Fanny's grave. This was another shock for her, but she had now passed the stage at which one feels emotional shocks. In the meanwhile Troy had decided to leave Bathsheba. Accordingly, he went away.

Q. 4. *Tell the story of Boldwood's love for Bathsheba and the fate that he met* ?

Ans. *The valentine* : Farmer Boldwood was a serious-minded, sober, gloomy type of person. For some unknown reason he had never shown any interest in women. He was known to be a confirmed bachelor and a celibate. But the valentine which he received by post caused a great stir in his mind. He tried to imagine who the writer of this letter could be and what could be her motive in writing the words "Marry me." He learnt from Gabriel Oak that the handwriting on the letter was that of Bathsheba. He was surprised to know that Bathsheba had sent him the valentine. But he did not know that the valentine had been sent by Bathsheba quite thoughtlessly and without any motive.

Boldwood becomes a lover : On the next market-day, Boldwood kept looking all the time at Bathsheba. Prior to this, Boldwood had paid no attention at all to Bathsheba. But this time Bathsheba was aware of his eyes following her

in whichever direction she went. She became conscious that she had aroused Boldwood's feelings. This was a triumph for her vanity. In fact Boldwood was now completely possessed by the thought of Bathsheba. The valentine had produced a tremendous effect upon him. He was now full of a genuine lover's love for her.

Boldwood proposes : A few days later Boldwood mustered courage to meet Bathsheba and inform her of his love for her. He found her at the sheep-washing pool and told her that ever since he had seen her he had lost control over himself. He urged her to marry him because without her his life would be a burden and a misery. At first Bathsheba totally refused but Boldwood went on pleading his love with such earnestness and sincerity that she asked for time to think over the matter.

Boldwood's hope : Boldwood met her again during the sheep-shearing. Seeing them together, the workmen began to indulge in speculation regarding Bathsheba's marriage to Boldwood. Some time later, at the end of the sheep shearing season, Bathsheba held a shearing supper for her workmen. Boldwood also came to this function. After supper there was some singing. Bathsheba also sang. Then Bathsheba and Boldwood withdrew from amongst the guests. This time again Boldwood told her that he loved her madly and wanted to marry her. Bathsheba again promised to think over the proposal. Boldwood said that he was going out of Weatherbury for five or six weeks and expressed the hope that she would give him an encouraging reply on his return. Boldwood was now inwardly certain that Bathsheba would soon accept him.

Bathsheba's marriage : Then occurred Bathsheba's accidental meeting with Troy. She now felt certain that she could not marry Boldwood. Accodingly she wrote a letter to Boldwood informing him of her inability to marry him. Boldwood met her when she was on her way to the house of Liddy's aunt. He pleaded for mercy to Bathsheba, saying that he could not live without her. He said that she was a fool to be attracted by the superficial glitter of Sergreant Troy. On learning that Sergeant Troy had kissed Bathsheba,

Boldwood uttered curses on Sergeant and said in a furious mood that he would teach a lesson to Sergeant Troy. Bathsheba was frightened by his threat and soon after leaving Boldwood, she drove to Bath to meet the Sergeant. At Bath she got married to Troy.

Boldwood's helplessness : After marrying Bathsheba, Troy happened to meet Boldwood. Boldwood did not know of the marriage. Therefore, Boldwood appealed to Sergeant Troy to marry Fanny Robin and leave Bathsheba alone. Boldwood offered him money in case Sergeant Troy agreed. But Sergeant Troy said that his love affair with Bathsheba was far advanced. Thereupon Boldwood urged Troy to marry Bathsheba. But Troy was only befooling Boldwood. The same night Troy showed Boldwood a paragraph in a newspaper announcing the marriage of Troy and Bathsheba at Bath. Boldwood was furious but he could do nothing.

The revival of hope : Boldwood had now lost all interest in life and in even in his farm. He paid no attention to his ricks even though the rain was imminent. He used to wander aimlessly. When, however, the news came that Troy was drowned, Boldwood's hope of marrying Bathsheba revived. While returning from the annual sheep-fair on Greenhill, Boldwood again appealed to Bathsheba to marry him. She said that she was not certain of Troy's death, and that in order to re-marry she would have to wait for a period of seven years from the date of Troy's disappearance. Boldwood was prepared to wait all these years if she would just give him a promise to marry him. Bathsheba, under his pressure, replied that she would give him a definite answer at Christmas time which was nearing.

The shooting and Boldwood's imprisonment : Christmas eve came. Boldwood had arranged a lavish party to celebrate the occasion. He was expecting Bathsheba to give him a definite promise of marriage that night. Bathsheba went to the party unwillingly because she did not really wish to marry Boldwood. At the party, Boldwood spoke to her privately and sought a promise of marriage from her. He pressed her so hard that she was compelled to give him a promise that she would marry him at the end of seven years from the day on

which Troy had disappeared. But a little later Sergeant Troy burst into the hall. Bathsheba was stunned to see him. Troy told her that he had come to take her away but she kept quiet. Troy then asked her to accompany him without any more waste of time. She still did not move. Thereupon, Boldwood called out to her to go home with her husband. Bathsheba still remained motionless, as if lost in a dream. Then Troy caught her by the arm and tried to pull her by force. She gave a scream as if she had been hurt. At this stage Boldwood fired a shot on Troy and killed him. Then he tried to kill himself but was prevented from doing so by the men. He rushed out of his house, went straight to Casterbridge and surrendered himself to the police. The court sentenced him to death for murder. But a petition was sent to the Home Secretary, informing him of certain facts which had not been brought to the notice of the court. According to the petition, there was strong evidence to show that Boldwood had been out of his mind for several months before he committed the murder. In fact Boldwood's mind has been unhinged by his fruitless passion for Bathsheba. The petition for mercy was accepted and the sentence of death was commuted to imprisonment during Her Majesty's pleasure.

Q. 5. *How did Fanny take her revenge ?*

Ans. *Posthumous revenge* : Fanny did not take any deliberate revenge upon Troy and Bathsheba. She was too humble and too meek to form any plan of revenge. Her revenge was taken after her death. This revenge took the form of a furious quarrel between Troy and Bathsheba and their separation. Circumstances following the death of Fanny took an unexpected turn leading to Fanny's posthumous revenge.

Troy's reaction on seeing the dead Fanny : Even before the death of Fanny, Bathsheba had become suspicious about her husband's relations with Fanny before his marriage. But it was when Fanny's coffin was brought into the house of Bathsheba that she really felt certain that there had existed a love affair between Troy and Fanny and that Troy had seduced Fanny, resulting in her pregnancy, child birth and

death. Her heart began to burn with jealousy of Fanny. But Fanny was dead and jealousy was no use. Just at that time, Troy stepped into the room and saw the coffin. He approached the coffin and saw the dead bodies of both mother and child. He was stunned at the sight. He remained standing still as if there was no motive-power left in him. Bathsheba asked him if he knew the woman. Troy said that he knew her. Bathsheba inquired if it was the same woman whom he once wanted to marry. Troy said that she was. Then Bathsheba saw Troy sinking upon his knees, full of remorse and reverence for the dead woman. He bent over Fanny Robin and gently kissed her. Troy's action was unbearably painful to Bathsheba. She sprang towards him and flung her arms round his neck, exclaiming wildly, "Do not kiss her, Frank, I cannot bear it. I love you better than she did. Kiss me also Frank-kiss me !" Troy disengaged himself from her embrace and pushed her away, saying, "I will not kiss you." She asked him why? He said that he had behaved like a bad, black hearted man towards Fanny. He went on to say that Fanny, even though dead, was dearer to him than Bathsheba ever was or would be or could be. He added that the devil had tempted him with Bathsheba's pretty face and her coquetries. He said that he would have married Fanny if Bathsheba had not come in his way.

Bathsheba's grief : The Troy turned towards the dead body of Fanny and said : "But never mind darling, in the sight of Heaven you are my very, very wife." At these words there came from Bathsheba a cry of immeasurable disappointment and agony, a cry of torment which had never before been heard in that house. Sobbing pitifully, she asked, if Fanny was his wife, what was she. Troy told her that she was nothing to him. A ceremony before a priest could not make a marriage, he said. Morally he did not belong to her. Bathsheba could not stand any more. She was overcome by a powerful impulse to run away from him, to escape his words at any price. She waited not a moment but turned to the door and ran out.

Troy leaves Bathsheba : Bathsheba spent the night in the wood. The next day Troy erected a tombstone on Fanny Robin's grave and then left the village. He had decided not

to live with Bathsheba any more. Such was the revenge that Fanny Robin took after her death.

Q. 6. *How did Troy meet his end ? How did his death affect the course of Bathsheba's life ?*

Ans. *The report of Troy's drowning in the sea* : After leaving Weatherbury, Troy had walked on aimlessly till he arrived at a small basin of sea enclosed by rocks. The sight of the ocean water stimulated him and he decided to bathe in it. He undressed and plunged into the water. An unexpected strong current carried him into the open sea where he would have been drowned if he had not been rescued by a ship's boat. After being rescued by the boat, Troy sailed to the United States. He had not been able to recover his clothes from the sea-shore for want of time. His clothes were found by someone else and his identity was revealed by his belongings, etc. The news was brought to Bathsheba that her husband had been drowned in the sea. But something from within her told Bathsheba that her husband was alive.

Hired by a circus : After having lived a few months in the U.S.A., Troy returned to England. He had not been successful in the U.S.A. and so he decided to return to his wife. But once in England he could not make up his mind to return to Bathsheba. So he wandered hither and thither till he was hired by a travelling circus.

His performance in disguise : It so happened that the aforesaid circus came to the sheep-fair on Greenhill where it started giving performances, the chief attraction being Troy's sensational trick-riding on a horse. From behind the curtains Troy saw that his wife also sat among the audience. So he disguised himself more effectively than he used to do formerly and dispensed with the speeches that he was expected to make on the stage, because he did not wish to be recognised by Bathsheba.

Troy returns to claim his wife : Ultimately, feeling sick of his life as a hired performer in the circus, Troy decided to return to Bathsheba and claim her as his wife. He arrived in Weatherbury on Christmas eve when Boldwood

was giving a party at his house. Boldwood had given this party because he expected Bathsheba to give him a promise that she would marry him seven years after the date of Troy's disappearnce. In fact, under strong pressure from Boldwood, and unable to resist his pleadings and entreaties, Bathsheba did give him the desired promise. But a little later, Troy burst into the hall of Boldwood's house. Troy's arrival had already become known to some of the men but they had not dared to disclose the news either to Boldwood or to Bathsheba. His entry, therefore, was most dramatic. Bathsheba was stunned to see Troy. She did not know whether it was reality or a dream. She felt indescribably wretched and miserable. She sank down on the stairs where she had been standing. There she sat, unable to move or to speak. Troy addressed Bathsheba and said that he had come to take her away. She remained silent. He repeated that he had come for her. But she did not rise. He went close to her and inquired if she had heard him. But Bathsheba still did not move. At this stage, Boldwood called out to Bathsheba and urged her to go with her husband. But Bathsheba still sat motionless. The truth was that Bathsheba was not in full possession of her senses at that time. Her mind was a total blank. She had not been able to comprehend situation. The whole incident seemed to her to be an illusion.

Boldwood fires at Troy : Finding Bathsheba sitting rigid, Troy stretched out his hands to pull her towards him. But she shrank back. Troy was irritated and seizing her arm pulled her sharply. Bathsheba seemed to have been hurt by his grasp and she uttered a scream of fear. Finding Bathsheba unwilling to go with Troy and noticing Troy's threatening attitude towards her Boldwood acted instantaneously. He quickly picked up a double barrelled gun which lay close and fired at Troy. Troy fell, pierced by the bullet through his body, and died.

The effect of Troy's death on the course of Bathsheba's life : The strange circumstances in which Troy met his death filled Bathsheba with wild grief. She put the whole blame upon herself. She was filled with self-accusation. For some time she had no peace. Gradually, however, her grief subsided.

She now led a life of seclusion and retirement. She avoided everyone and remained for the most part of her time indoors. She had arranged for Troy's burial in the same grave in which Fanny lay and had indicated this fact on the tombstone which had been erected by Troy. As time passed, she did begin to take a little interest in the affairs of her business, but she found that Gabriel Oak had begun to avoid her. Then one day he sent her a written notice that he was leaving her service. As she could not do without Gabriel Oak, she went to his house to ask him the reason why he was leaving her. There in the course of talk, Gabriel Oak proposed marriage to her and she agreed. Thus the death of Troy and the imprisonment of Boldwood led Bathsheba to marry Gabriel Oak who was in fact her very first lover.

Q. 7. *Relate the circumstances leading to Gabriel's union with Bathsheba.*

Ans. *Bathsheba's retired life*: After Boldwood's shooting of Troy and on imprisonment, Bathsheba had begun to lead a retired life. She avoided everyone and spent most of her time indoors. With the coming of spring, however, Bathsheba improved in body and in mind. As summer approached, she began to take a little interest in the affairs of her business which she had left completely in the hands of Gabriel Oak.

Oak's notice: One day she happened to meet Gabriel Oak in the churchyard. He informed her that he had decided to leave England by the following spring. This was a shock for Bathsheba. She told him that she could not carry on the work of farming without his help. He was the only one who had stuck to her through thick and thin and now he too was deserting her. She felt him to be an indispensable. That day she went home with her mind occupied by a new anxiety.

Oak's written notice to quit: Three weeks passed. Bathsheba found that Oak had now begun to avoid her. Instead of coming to her for consultation regarding business matters as he used to do formerly, he had now begun to send oral or written messages to her. This was very distressing to Bathsheba. This man who had been so devoted to her now

seemed to hate her. She asked herself if she had become so contemptible. Then she received a formal notice by letter from Gabriel Oak saying that he would not be able to renew his contract with her and that he would be leaving her service shortly. Bathsheba bitterly cried over this letter. She felt grieved and wounded. It seemed to her that she would never again be able to go to the market to buy and sell. What should she do now? Her life was becoming barren and empty. So desolate did she feel that evening that she decided to call upon Gabriel at his house.

Bathsheba's visit to Gabriel: It was the first time for Bathsheba to visit Gabriel's house. It did not seem proper for a single woman to call upon a bechelor who lived alone. Oak also felt embarrassed to be alone with her at his place. Bathsheba asked if she had in any way offended him. He told her that he could never be offended with her. She inquired why, then, he was leaving her. He answered that at first he had thought of migrating to California but that now a circumstance had occurred to change his mind. Boldwood's farm, in which he had previously a share, was now going to be entrusted to him completely for superintendence. Therefore, he had decided to stay in Weatherbury. He told her that he would have continued to look after her farm also if people had not started talking about him and her. Bathsheba asked what were people thinking about them. Gaberiel said that people were thinking that he was waiting to take possession of Boldwood's farm with the object of marrying Bathsheba some day. Bathsheba said that her marrying him would be too absurd, or at any rate, would be premature at that stage. Gabriel felt hurt by Bathsheba's considering his marriage with her too absurd. But she realised what she had said and begged his pardon with tears in her eyes. She said that she had not meant to call the idea of his marrying her too absurd but that she had only meant that it would be premature for her to re-marry.

Bathsheba agrees to marry Gabriel: Gabriel moved close to Bathsheba and said whether she would allow him to love her and win her and marry her after all. Bathsheba replied that he would never know that. Gabriel

asked why? Bathsheba replied that he had always remained silent on the subject. Gabriel understood her and felt very happy. It was clear that she did not object to his loving her with the object of marrying her. Bathsheba then told him that he had been very cruel to her in sending her the notice. She said that she had been his very first sweetheart, and that he was the first lover she had ever known. Gabriel remarked that he had wanted to leave her not because he wished to desert her but because people had started talking about them and it would have injured her good name. Bathsheba said that people's talk meant nothing to her. She added that she was very happy to have come to him, though it seemed as if she had come to court him.

As a result of this conversation Bathsheba and Gabriel got married soon afterwards.

Q. 8. *It is said that Hardy's women have less force of character than the men. How far is this opinion applicable to 'Far From the Madding Crowd'?*

Ans. *A correct view* : The opinion that Hardy's women have less force of character than the men is to a large extent justified. We can illustrate the truth of this opinion by contrasting the three principal male characters with three women characters in the story. Bathsheba, Fanny Robin and Liddy Smallbury may be taken as representing the female creations of Hardy while Gabriel Oak, Farmer Boldwood and Sergeant Troy may be taken as representing Hardy's male characters in this novel.

The case of Liddy : Let us take the case of Liddy. She is a servant-companion to Bathsheba. It is true that she has a certain degree of independence and some self-respect in her nature but, on the whole, she has hardly any individuality. Although she is made to live before us, we cannot see that she has any force of character. In fact, on most occasions she strikes us as being an echo of her mistress. For instance, on one occasion when they are discussing Boldwood's gloom and reserve, Liddy expresses an opinion which is different from Bathsheba's, but when Bathsheba repeats her opinion, Liddy shifts her position and hastens to agree with her mistress. It is true that, being a servant, she cannot really assert herself.

Still even after making allowances for her inferior social status, we cannot regard Liddy as possessing any strength of character.

Fanny Robin : Fanny Robin is a weak, helpless, pathetic figure. She does not have the strength to assert her claim upon Sergeant Troy. If she had any force of character, she would never have allowed Sergeant Troy to put her off and to desert her. But she submits to circumstances. In fact, she is such a weak-minded person that she goes to the wrong church and thus misses the chance of marrying Troy. Her subsequent fate confirms us in our impression that she is weak and helpless.

Bathsheba : Bathsheba has a lot of heroic stuff in her. She is capable of prompt decisions. She can supervise her farm efficiently. She deals with her workmen effectively. She has an unusual courage which is seen in her dressing the dead body of Sergeant Troy in grave-clothes and sitting beside the dead body for more than an hour. She also bears her desertion by Troy and her widowhood with calmness and courage. She belongs to the category of women who become mothers of heroes. We have to admit, therefore, that Bathsheba possesses a certain force of character. But even she suffers from several weaknesses. She is vain ; she is susceptible to flattery ; she is rash and impulsive ; she is hasty and often thoughtless. She has a bad temper and lacks self-control. These faults and weaknesses adversely affect our estimate of her as a woman of character.

Sergeant Troy : Now let us consider the men. Sergeant Troy is without any moral scruples. Even so, he is self-assertive and dominating. He is not the type of man to be cowed by any woman. Bathsheba is a strong-minded woman but Troy utterly disregards her and almost brushes her aside when he finds the dead bodies of Fanny and her child in the coffin. Before this, when she objects to his losing money on horse-races, he bluntly tells her that he made a mistake by marrying her. When she suspects him of personally knowing the woman who collapsed on the road-side and whom he helped to rise from the ground, he says that he cares a damn for her suspicion. Whatever Troy's weaknesses

and defects, and he has plenty of them, he is a strong-willed, strong-minded, and self-assertive person.

Boldwood : Boldwood, too, possesses a strong character in the sense that he is a deep-natured man and a man of volcanic passion. His passion sweeps everything before it. His vehement declaration of love forces Bathsheba into submission. When Troy is about to use violence with Bathsheba, Boldwood loses no time in shooting the man dead even though he has to pay a heavy price for the deed. It is true that he acts thus because his mind is crazed, yet he have to give him credit for his strength of will, strength of determination, and strength of feeling. Before he receives the valentine, his strength of character is seen in his complete indifference to women. Even though several girls try to arouse his desire, he remains unmoved.

Oak : But it is Gabriel Oak who possesses the maximum strength of character in the novel. His loyalty and devotion to Bathsheba are his most striking qualities. He is solid and dependable as the oak tree whose name he bears. He endures the loss of his sheep bravely and bears his disappointment in love calmly. He is a man of deep feeling but, unlike Boldwood, he can exercise control over his heart. His fidelity to Bathsheba is remarkable and his unwavering sense of duty is admirable. He undoubtedly, is a man of character.

Q. 9. *Bring out the significance of the title of this novel.*

Ans. *The source and meaning of the title* : In Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Church-yard*, occurs the following stanza :

> Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
> Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
> Along the cool sequester'd vale of life,
> They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

In this stanza Gray refers to the quiet and peaceful life of the people living in a village. Hardy has borrowed the phrase "far from the madding crowd" from Gray's poem and used it as a title for this novel. The "madding crowd" represents the crowded, congested, suffocating life of the city.

The scene of all the stories of Hardy is laid in the countryside, in a region of England to which he gives the name of Wessex. His novels are for this reason known as the Wessex novels. The scene of this novel has also been laid in the same region. Hardy wishes to imply that the life of the country people is peaceful and calm and free from the tumult, the turmoil and the strife which mark the life of the towns people.

The peaceful life of the rustics : The rustic characters in this novel—Joseph Poorgrass, Jan Coggan, and others of the same group—lead a quiet and carefree life. They spend their time doing their duties, chatting in the local Malthouse and drinking. They have no aspirations and no ambitions. For this reason they have few or no worries and anxieties. They entertain themselves with gossip of all kinds. Time passes by them unnoticed. There are no political intrigues, no party agitations, no business disputes and rivalries, no acts of crime, no emotional storms in their lives. The course of their life is indeed, peaceful and tranquil. They are quite satisfied and contented with the lot in which providence has placed them. Their chief occupations are sheep-washing, sheep-shearing, harvesting, thatching, hay-making, etc. They have absolutely no notion, except from the rumours they have heard, of how the city people live. Cain Ball's visit to the city of Bath is, therefore, an event for them and they all crowd around him on his return to hear his account of what he has seen.

Irony in the title: But though the title of the novel seems to refer to the peace and quiet in the lives of these rustic characters, the title is not without an ironical significance. Although Boldwood and Bathsheba live in the countryside, far from the madding crowd, they are neither happy nor contented. There are vicissitudes in their lives. There is tumult in the life of Boldwood. There is a tragedy in the life of Bathsheba. These two are far from happy. Their fate arouses our deepest sympathy. Fanny Robin's end is also tragic and heart-rending, Perhaps Hardy wants us to believe that even in the countryside misfortune and suffering are not absent. There are certain persons even in the country-

side whose temperament and whose nature mark them out for tragedy and who are the chosen victims of fate.

Q. 10. *Write a brief critical appreciation of the 'Far From The Madding Crowd'.*

Ans. *The plot* : This novel has an interesting, gripping plot. We read the story from chapter to chapter breathlessly. We are deeply engrossed in the fortunes and misfortunes of various characters. The feeling of suspense is created at many places and we are very anxious to know what happens next. Love being the chief subject of the story, the novel acquires an even greater interest. Different types of man's love for woman are depicted, leading to results. Indeed, Hardy is a very successful maker of plots. The story abounds in dramatic scenes and situations. Bathsheba's encounter with Troy, Boldwood's vehement declaration of love, Bathsheba's infatuation of Troy, the demonstrations of sword-play, Bathsheba's drive to Bath at night and the chase by Gabriel Oak and Jan Coggan, the saving of the ricks by Gabriel Oak from fire and against rain, Troy's remorse and repentance on seeing the dead Fanny in the coffin and his harsh words to Bathsheba—these are some of the highlights of the story. These scenes and situations are most arresting and dramatic.

Characterization : Hardy is a great creator of characters. The various characters in this novel are made to live before us. Bathsheba with her vanity, love of flattery, impulsiveness, courage and self-confidence remains in our memory long after we have read the novel. Gabriel Oak with his unwavering loyalty and devotion; Troy with his irresistible manner of talking and his dash; Boldwood with his serious and gloomy nature and his volcanic passion—these too are specimens of Hardy's realistic and convincing characterization. Even the rustics, Joseph Poorgrass and others, are made to live in the pages of the novel. The various portraits painted by Hardy in the story are true to life. We feel as if we have been brought into close and personal contact with the characters. We share their feelings, their passions, their experiances, their sorrows, etc.

Philosophy of life : This is one of the early novels of Hardy. But his philosophy of life is clearly indicated here. This novel shows Hardy's belief that man is destined to suffer. Gabriel Oak's hopes of becoming an independent and prosperous shepherd-farmer turn to dust. His love for Bathsheba remains unfulfilled for a long time. Fanny's end is most tragic. Boldwood meets a sad fate. Bathsheba's life is completely wrecked though her marriage with Gabriel at the end of story consoles us to some extent. Thus all the characters are made to suffer. They suffer partly on account of their own faults and follies and partly on account of the cruelty of circumstances. The element of chance and accident, which is so marked in the later novels of Hardy, is not absent from this novel. Often it is an unforeseen, accidental happening which causes the unhappiness of human beings in the novel. The element of chance or accident is indicative of Hardy's belief in a cruel, hostile fate. The only persons who are happy in the novel are the rustics who have no desires and aspirations. Hardy seems to believe that a state of desirelessness is the only means to happiness. But though Hardy is a pessimist, he is not a cynic. He seems to have life but he loves human beings. Life is full of sorrows and misfortunes but human beings are essentially good. Such is Hardy's philosophy of life.

Humour : The novel has a happy ending ; but the story is, on the whole, sad and tragic. Although Hardy is a writer of tragic novels, he provides rich, sparkling humour in his novels. This humour is provided chiefly by rustics. We are greatly amused by the conversation of the rustic characters like Joseph Poorgrass, Jan Coggan, and the old maltster. Their humour is mainly unconscious. We are amused also by the oddities of the rustics. The stories of the shyness timidity and cowardice of Joseph Poorgrass are most funny. The maltster's desire to be regarded as older than he really is, is quite amusing. The weakness of Joseph Poorgrass and Jan Coggan for liquor also proves to be a source of fun. Besides, humour is provided by many remarks and comments made by Hardy in the course of the narration. The element of humour in the novel relieves the tension of the story which is, on the whole, sad and tragic.

Local colour or the pastoral character of the story : The scenes of all Hardy's novels are laid in a region of England to which Hardy gives the name of Wessex. In the novels of Hardy, Wessex comes to have a real and living character. The pastoral character of this novel is emphasised by such rustic occupations as sheep-washing, sheep-shearing, and the buying and selling of sheep at the annual fair at Greenhill. The local colour in the novel is also created by Hardy's minute and detailed descriptions of the landscape and scenery around Norcombe Hill and the village of Weatherbury. References are made also to farming, harvesting, hay making, the hiving of bees, the transactions at the market in Casterbridge and so on. These further emphasise the rural background of the story of the novel.

Style : Hardy is one of the greatest prose-stylists in English fiction. He has an astonishing command of the language. All the resources of the language are at his disposal. The wealth and scope of his vocabulary are amazing. This is seen not only in his descriptions of the landscape and the scenery but also in his portrayals of character and his pictures of human moods and of all shades of human feeling, even the subtlest. His style cannot be called simple. The average reader will find his style rather tough. But for the initiated reader, Hardy's style is a source of great aesthetic pleasure.

Q. 11. ***Bring out the tragic elements in the novel.***

Ans. *Minor tragedies* : Gabriel Oak's loss of his two hundred sheep, is, as Hardy calls it, a pastoral tragedy for the sheep who have met a premature end as a result of the folly of a dog. It is also a tragedy for Gabriel Oak whose dream of becoming a prosperous shepherd-farmer has come to nothing. After the loss of these sheep, Gabriel has to become a paid employee at Weatherbury. The dog's death which Sergeant Troy meets is also a sad event but we cannot call it tragic because we do not feel any sympathy for Troy. In fact, we have a feeling that Troy rightly deserves the end that he has met. His villainy is suitably punished. But the principal tragedies that occur in the course of the novel relate to the lives of Boldwood, Bathsheba and Fanny Robin.

The tragedy of Boldwood: Boldwood was a serious-minded and sober type of person. He kept to himself and was self-contained. The valentine, however, awakens a volcanic passion in him. Thereafter, he knows no rest. He seeks by a vehement pleading of his love to win Batesheba as his wife. But he fails. His unsatisfied passion becomes an obsession with him, a mania. His passion drives him almost crazy. Mentally deranged as he is, he acts rashly in firing at Troy. He is sentenced to death for killing Troy. But as a result of a mercy petition, the sentence is commuted to imprisonment during Her Majesty's pleasure. Our heart goes out to Boldwood in sympathy. He is the victim partly of his own abnormal temperament and partly of the cruelty of fate.

The tragedy of Bathsheba: Bathsheba was a young woman with a great zest for life, full of high spirits, and the physical and mental vigour of youth. Troy's handsome appearance, his dash, and his flattery swept her off her feet. Being an impulsive and romantic type of woman, she instantly fell in love with Troy who had kindled the fire of her passion. But Troy proves to be faithless to her. The sight of the dead Fanny fills Troy with remorse and repentence and he finds it impossible to live with Bathsheba any longer. He talks to Bathsheba very harshly, thus intensifying the pain which Bathsheba is already feeling on discovering that a love affair had existed once between her husband and Fanny. Troy pushes Bathsheba away from him and tells her that she is no wife to him because, he says, a mere ceremony before a priest does not make a marriage. This is a great crisis in the life of Bathsheba. Troy deserts her and goes away. Subsequently he returns to claim Bathsheba but she is stunned to see him. His insolence provokes Boldwood to fire at him and Bathsheba becomes a widow. Thus Bathsheba's experience of love has been very bitter and tragic. Afterwards, she marries, Gabriel Oak and we can be certain that he must have made her happy, but the woman who marries Gabriel Oak is not the same Bathsheba and she cannot love Oak in the ardent and passionate manner in which she loved Troy. It is a sober, chastened woman who marries Gabriel Oak and we have no doubt that painful

memories of the past will always cling to her and cause her to feel unhappy now and again. Bathsheba's tragedy is due partly to her own temperament, her rashness, wildness, and impulsiveness and partly to the cruelty of fate which is responsible for the turn that events take.

The tragedy of Fanny Robin : Most rending is the fate that Fanny Robin meets. She is a young, simple-minded, innocent, trusting girl who falls into the clutches of an unscrupulous soldier, Sergeant Troy. She readily believes his assurances of marriage and surrenders to him. He does make an appointment with her in order to marry her. But, as ill-luck would have it, she goes to the wrong church and misses the chance of marrying him. Thereafter he puts her off. Forsaken and deserted, Fanny Robin does not know to whom to turn. She manages somehow to earn a living. But as the time of delivery approaches, she feels more and more worried. Being penniless, she decides to go to Poor House at Casterbridge. She has to walk the whole distance in her ailing condition. She arrives at the Poor House half-dead. There, after giving birth to the child, she dies. The child dies also. The chapter which describes Fanny's journey on foot to Casterbridge, using various devises to reduce the strain, is perhaps the most poignant, the most moving account in the whole story, an account which draws tears from our eye. Indeed the fate of Fanny Robin is much more painful and pathetic than the misfortune which befell Bathsheba. Of course, Bathsheba, possessing a stronger mind and a firmer nature, is able to endure her misfortune bravely and to survive it, while Fanny Robin, poor and weak as she is, cannot survive the disaster that has overtaken her. Fanny meets a tragic end partly because she was too trustful in having believed Troy's assurance, partly because of her own error in going to the wrong church and missing the chance of marrying Troy, but mainly on account of the callousness and wickedness of Troy.

Q. 12. *Comment on the ending of this novel. Do you think it to be a suitable ending? Give reasons for your answer.*

Ans. The novel ends with the union of Gabriel Oak

and Bathsheba. As Bathsheba remarks, Gabriel Oak was her very first lover and she was his first sweetheart. Oak has been loving Bathsheba ever since he saw her first travelling by waggon to Norcombe Hill to stay with her aunt. His proposal of marriage to Bathsheba at Norcombe Hill is rejected by her. After some time Bathsheba leaves Norcombe Hill and goes away to Weatherbury where she takes charge of her uncle's property at the death of her uncle. Fate throws Oak and Bathsheba together again. Oak becomes Bathsheba's shepherd. Meanwhile his love for her has not diminished. But she does not think of him in terms of a suitor. Nor does he has any hope that she will love him or become his wife.

Oak can see Bathsheba's infatuation for Troy. He tries to warn her against developing an intimacy with that man. But she marries Troy. The valentine sent by her having kindled Boldwood's passion, Boldwood had pleaded his love to her but she told him frankly that she could not marry him. Eventually Troy deserts Bathsheba and Boldwood presses his suit again. Boldwood's shooting of Troy makes Bathsheba a widow. All this time Oak has been in her service working for her loyally and whole-heartedly, but now, feeling afraid of injuring her good name, he decides to leave her whereupon she pays a visit to him at his house and, in the course of the conversation, agrees to marry him. At last Oak's love is fulfilled.

The ending of the novel has been criticised by some as being tame and undramatic. There is much substance in this criticism. It seems to us that the union of Bathsheba and Gabriel is not natural and convincing. Bathsheba had never looked upon Gabriel as a lover and had never felt attracted by him as a possible husband. This is, therefore, obviously a passionless marriage. It is more a marriage of convenience on her side than a marriage of love. It is difficult for us to believe that a woman like Bathsheba would marry Gabriel just because he has become indispensable to her to look after her farm and business. The ending would have been more appropriate and more in harmony with Hardy's philosophy of life if Gabriel were to leave Bathsheba

and if his love for her were to remain unfulfilled. The ending would then have been in keeping with the general atmosphere of the novel also. As it is, a happy ending seems to have been forced upon the novel. Perhaps Hardy did not wish to make it too sad. It is one of his early novels and Hardy's philosophy of life had not yet become so dark and pessimistic. Most readers will welcome the happy ending because they would like to see Gabriel Oak rewarded for his loyalty and devotion to Bathsheba. Nor should we try to find fault with the ending on technical grounds or on ground of realism as long as we are satisfied at seeing fidelity and patience rewarded.

Q. 13. *Refer briefly to some of the dramatic scenes and situations in 'Far From the Madding Crowd.'*

Ans. A dramatic scene or situation is one which excites, stirs, or startles the reader. It has a sensational quality. It arouses some kind of strong feeling in the reader and greatly arouses his interest. *Far From the Madding Crowd* contains quite a number of dramatic scenes and situations.

Saving the ricks from fire and against rain : On two occasions, Gabriel saves the property of Bathsheba from being ruined. On one occasion he puts out a fire that has broken out on a hay-rick and that was likely to spread to the wheat-ricks of Bathsheba. A number of Bathsheba's workmen have collected but none knows what to do. It is an hour of anxiety for Bathsheba and her workmen. But Oak makes desperate efforts to save the wheat ricks and succeeds in extinguishing the fire. On another occasion, a heavy and a severe storm are imminent and Bathsheba's ricks lie unprotected. Gabriel works single-handed upon the ricks at great personal risk on account of the danger of lightning. Bathsheba is greatly worried about the safety of ricks and renders a little assistance to Gabriel. On this occasion she also explains the circumstances which forced her to marry Troy at Bath. Both the above incident have a dramatic value.

Boldwood's declaration of love : Boldwood's declaration of love to Bathsheba have a strong dramatic quality. On two occassions he pleads his love with a great emphasis and vehemence. Indeed, we are astonished by the volcanic nature

of his passion. On learning that Troy has kissed Bathsheba, he bursts into a fit of fury and threatens to teach a lesson to that man. The various scenes in which Boldwood pleads his love and utters his threats create in us mixed feelings of sympathy, anxiety, suspense, and terror.

Hot chase and tearful eyes : There is a dramatic situation when Bathsheba overhears her women servants speaking ill of Troy and bursts into a fit of anger. She scolds them all and then in the privacy of her own room, she tells Liddy amid tears that she is madly and wildly in love with Troy. That night her mood and frame of mind are described by Troy in the phrase "Hot cheeks and tearful eyes." She alternately uses hard words and soft words to Liddy, scolding and reprimanding her and then apologizing to her. It is in this scene that we observe a passionate quality of Bathsheba's temperament.

The sword exercise and the kiss : The description of Troy's demonstration of his skill with the sword is another darmatic situation. The demonstration is given in a hallow amid the ferns. Troy wields his sword with a remarkable dexterity and rapidity of movement. Bathsheba is frightened, amused, fascinated, swept off her feet by Troy's sword exercise. The same feelings are produced in our hearts also. At the end of the demonstration, Troy suddenly kisses Bathsheba and goes away.

The chase : The account of the chase which Gabriel Oak and Jan Coggan gave to Bathsheba one night when she had driven to the city of Bath is also to be counted among the dramatic incidents of the novel. Bathsheba has set out on a drive to Bath without telling anyone. Oak and Coggan get the impression that some Gipsy thief has stolen the horse and the carriage. So they set out in pursuit of horses. The reader is made to experience a powerful feeling of suspense till, on being overtaken, the supposed Gipsy thief turns out to be Bathsheba herself.

The awful scene between Bathsheba and Troy : Perhaps the most dramatic scene in the novel is the one where Bathsheba sees the dead body of Fanny and her child in the coffin and is burning with jealousy when Troy steps into the house

and disowns Bathsheba. Filled with remorse and regret, Troy kisses the dead Fanny whereupon Bathsheba passionately pleads her own love for Troy and asks him not to kiss Fanny. Troy pushes her away saying that in the eyes of Heaven Fanny is his true wife and that Bathsheba is nothing to him. A ceremony before a priest, says Troy, cannot make a marriage. On hearing these words, Bathsheba feels crazy with grief and runs out of the house into the wood. This incident also produces in the reader a multitude of feelings and emotions, sympathy for Bathsheba, hatred of Troy, sympathy for the dead Fanny, grief at the tragedy that has overtaken Bathsheba, surprise at the unexpected turn which events have taken, and wonder as to what will happen next.

The shooting of Troy : Troy's reappearance, after he was reported to have been drowned, is another startling incident. We find him as a hired performer at the circus at the fair on Greenhill. Then he goes to Weatherbury in order to claim his wife. Boldwood is that night giving a party at his house. Troy bursts into the hall and reveals himself. Both Boldwood and Bathsheba are stunned to see him alive. Ultimately Boldwood fires at Troy, kills him, runs out of the house, goes to Casterbridge and surrenders himself to the police. The shooting of Troy occurs as a climax to Troy's attempts to prevail upon Bathsheba to accompany him out of Boldwood's house. The whole of this situation is intensely dramatic and like other dramatic situations, produces in us a multiplicity of feelings and emotions.

Nor are these the only dramatic situations in the story. There are several more but these are the highlights. These situations stand out in the novel and linger in our memory when we have finished that story.

Q. 14. *Bring out the element of chance or accident in this novel. Does this element make the story less plausible ?*

Or

Illustrate from the novel Hardy's belief in the persistence of the unforeseen and comment on it.

Ans. *Hardy's belief in unforeseen, accidental happenings*: Hardy believed in a hostile fate. According to him, fate

or destiny is malicious and operates in such a way as to deprive human beings of their expected or desired happiness. The hostility of fate in the novels of Hardy generally appears in the form of unforeseen happenings, that is, in the form of chances, accidents and coincidences. Hardy believed that the expected rarely happens while the unexpected and the unforeseen happens always. The element of chance and coincidence is not as marked in this novel as in his later novel. But even here it is not absent.

Oak's loss of his sheep : We see the element of chance or accident first in Gabriel's loss of two hundred sheep. It is a completely unforeseen occurrence. Oak was hoping to become one day an independent and prosperous shepherd-farmer. But one night his younger dog drives two hundred of his sheep over a hill as a result of which the sheep are all killed. This is a great calamity in the life of Oak. His hopes of prosperity are dashed to the ground.

Fanny's mistake : Chance or accident reveals itself in Fanny's failure to reach the All Saints' Church where Troy waited for her in order to marry her. Fanny by mistake goes to another church called All Souls'. The accidental failure of Fanny to reach the appointed place in time costs her not only her happiness but her very life. Fate seems to have played a trick on Fanny.

The valentine : Another unforeseen occurence is the effect of the valentine on Boldwood. Boldwood was a kind of woman-hater but the valentine produces totally unexpected results. His passion for Bathsheba is kindled and this passion has a volcanic character. Nobody could have thought that the serious-minded, gloomy Boldwood would fall in love so widly and desperately. Boldwood's whole life is ruined on account of this uncontrollable passion.

Bathsheba's meeting with Sergeant Troy : Is purely accidental. She come across him one night while she is returning to her house after her round of the farm. This accidental meeting leads to many complications. Bathsheba develops a liking for the handsome soldier and her love brings her disaster. If Troy had not met Bathsheba, there was some chance of her marrying Boldwood; and there was also

some chance of Troy's marrying Fanny Robin or at least saving her from the tragic fate which Fanny meets. Thus the accidental meeting of Bathsheba and Troy leads to a series of disasters.

The return of Troy: The return of Troy after his reported drowning is another unforeseen occurrence. It is a strange coincidence that Troy returns just at the time when Boldwood has obtained a promise from Bathsheba to marry him. Thus it is the second time that Troy robs Boldwood of his chance of marrying Bathsheba.

The delay in bringing Fanny's coffin: Another major chance or accident is the delay that takes place in bringing Fanny's coffin to Weatherbury. As a result of this unforeseen delay, Fanny's coffin is placed in Bathsheba's house. Bathsheba comes to know that a love affair had existed between Fanny and Troy. Troy also happens to see the dead Fanny lying in the coffin. This leads to Troy's sentimental behaviour towards Fanny and his separation from Bathsheba. Thus the tragedy of Bathsheba's life is directly brought about by Fanny Robin's coffin being placed in her house.

All accidents of a tragic nature: In the latter novels of Hardy, chance or accident repeats itself again and again with the result that the reader finds it difficult to believe that chance can play such a major role in the life of human beings. In those novels the use of chance and accident appears to be a mechanical device which greatly injures the realism of the story. In this novel, however, the element of chance is not so marked. The half a dozen examples of chance or accident which we have noted above do not make the story less plausible. After all chances and accidents do happen in human life, though not very frequently. It may be said, therefore, that the use of chance and accident does not do much damage to the realistic effect of this novel. In real life, however, there are lucky or happy accidents as well as sad and tragic accidents. In the novel before us, however, all the accidents are of a sad and unhappy nature. This means that Hardy's view of life is one-sided. We do begin to doubt to some extent whether Hardy is justified in introducing into the novel a number of unforeseen happenings all of which have tragic consequences for the characters.

Q. 15. *Bring out the ironies of life in the 'Far From The Madding Crowd'.*

Ans. *What is an irony of life* : An irony of life or an irony of fate is a situation or incident which seems to be a cruel trick played by destiny upon a human being. An irony of life is an unexpected, unforeseen, accidental occurrence which seems to produce the impression that a supernatural fate often intervenes to ruin the happiness of an individual or to snatch away from him some happiness that he was going to attain. In the mature novels of Hardy, this irony of fate is a persistent element in the lives of the characters. *Far From The Madding Crowd*, however, is an early novel. The irony of fate in this novel is not very marked or pronounced. Nevertheless, it does exist.

Gabriel Oak's loss of sheep: The first irony of life in the story is Gabriel Oak's loss of about two hundered sheep. Oak had been trying by means of hard work and industry to rise to the position of an independent shepherd-farmer but one night fate played a cruel trick upon this man. The younger one of his two dogs drove two hundred of his sheep over a precipice. All the sheep were killed. The entire wealth of Gabriel was ruined at a single stroke. All his hard work had come to nothing. He had not even paid in full for the sheep. He [calculated that the value of what was left to him would be just enough to pay his debts. We feel much sympathy fór Gabriel Oak in this misfortune which seems to be a heartless joke played by destiny upon him.

Ironies in the life of Fanny Robin : Troy would have married Fanny if she had reached the All Saints' church in time. But as ill-luck would have it, Fanny went to another church called All Souls'. This was a pure accident. Fanny's error cost her very dear. It seems to us that her destiny took her to the wrong church. This also, therefore, appears to us to be a cruel trick played upon Fanny by fate. Subsequently, it is a tragic irony that Troy should want to help her when it was too late. After meeting Fanny accidentally on the roadside, Troy sincerely wanted to do something to help her. But fate willed it otherwise. It is also a case of tragic irony that Troy should make amends to Fanny after her death by erecting a tomb-stone on her grave,

planting flowers there and leaving his wife Bathsheba. Another irony connected with Fanny Robin is the stoning away of the dog with whose help Fanny had managed to reach the Poor House at Casterbridge. It is curious that the dog who had been of such a service to a woman in distress should have been unconsciously stoned away by one of the keepers of the Poor House.

Ironies in the life of Boldwood : Bathsheba was at no stage really in love with Boldwood. But Boldwood, after receiving the valentine, pleaded his love to Bathsheba with such vehemence that Bathsheba promised to consider his proposal of marriage and might in course of time have agreed to marry him if she had not accidentally met Troy. Troy seems to have been sent by fate to rob Boldwood of the chance of marrying Bathsheba. After the reported drowning of Troy, Boldwood's hope of marrying Bathsheba revived. This time Bathsheba actually gave a promise to marry him seven years after the date of the reported drowning of Troy. But this time again Troy turned up and claimed Bathsheba. Fate repeated its irony by sending Troy a second time to deprive Boldwood of the happiness for which he had been yearning and which now seemed to have been within his reach. Boldwood is conscious of this irony of fate on both occaions. It seems that he has been marked out by destiny for unjust persecution.

Irony in the life of Bathsheba : Fate plays a cruel trick upon Bathsheba also. It so happens that Joseph Poorgrass who was to convey Fanny's coffin to Weatherbury is delayed at a roadside tavern. The result is that Fanny's coffin instead of being buried the same evening is placed in Bathsheba's house for the night. This leads to the tragedy of Bathsheba's life. If Fanny had been buried the same evening, Bathsheba would never have been able to verify the identity of the woman with whom her husband had a love-affair before his marriage. Nor would that awful scene between Bathsheba and Troy have taken place. Thus, the delay in bringing Fanny's coffin to Weatherbury proves to be an irony of fate for Bathsheba.

Q. 16. *Hardy may have hated life, but he loved the people*

who lived it. How far is this estimate borne out by 'Far From The Madding Crowd'?

Ans. Hardy paints a gloomy picture of life in this, as in other novels of his. He believes that man is born to suffer. He concentrates on the tragic side of life. He is thus a pessimist. Gabriel Oak's hopes of becoming an independent and prosperous shepherd-farmer are frustrated at an early stage. His love for Bathsheba does not bear any fruit for a long time. Boldwood experiences an acute mental torture caused by the non-fulfilment of his passionate desire to possess Bathsheba. His passion drives him crazy and his ultimate fate is very sad. Bathsheba's experience of love and marriage is very bitter and painful. Her love for Troy leads to the tragedy of her life. Thus the course of these three principal characters in the novel points to the conclusion which has already been stated above, namely, that human being are destined to suffer. They suffer partly on account of the cruelty of circumstances and the hostility of fate, but mainly owing to their own errors, follies and faults. The only people who are happy in the novel are the rustics who have no desires and aspirations. Hardy seems to believe that a state of desirelessness is the happiest for a human being. But this in itself is a pessimistic belief. Thus there seems to be no doubt that Hardy hates life as so unpleasant, so bitter, so full of distress and misfortune.

But Hardy is not a cynic. A cynic is a person who hates not only life but human beings also. A cynic has no opinion about human nature. A cynic believes that human nature is essentially wicked and ignoble. Such is not the attitude of Hardy. He believes that human beings are essentially good. There may be, here and there a villain like Troy, but, on the whole, Hardy believes in the fundamental goodness of human beings and the nobility of human nature. Oak is a model of loyalty, sincerity, self-sacrifice. Bathsheba does suffer from weaknesses like a vanity, love of flattery, and want of judgment, but she is essentially kind hearted and noble minded. She is free from meanness, trickery or cunning. Even Boldwood is at heart a good man who never wished to injure any one. Boldwood's concern for Fanny and his regret at her tragic fate are indicative of the goodness of his

heart. None of these characters in the novel is perfect. They all have their shortcomings, their failings and their faults. But they are more good than evil (with the exception of Troy). As for the low rustic characters, like Joseph Poorgrass and Jan Coggan, we find absolutely no villainy in them. They too have their weaknesses but there is no evil in them. It is for this reason that we can say that Hardy loved the people in his novels even though he hates the life which they lived.

Q. 17. *Bring out the humorous elements in the Far From the Madding Crowd.*

Ans. Althought *Far From The Madding Crowd* tells a serious tragic story, it contains a rich element of humour. The element of comedy in this novel is provided by (1) the rustic characters, (2) Hardy's sketch of Gabriel Oak, and (3) Hardy's remarks and comments on various situations and persons in the course of the narration and, occasionally, little bits of dialogue.

The rustics as a source of comedy : The rustic characters include Joseph Poorgrass, Jan Coggan, Henery Fray, the old maltster, Cain Ball, Mark Clark, Laban Tall, Jacob Smallbury, Matthew Moon, etc. Of these, Joseph Poorgrass provides the maximum amusement. We are greatly amused by the stories of his bashfulness, his timidity, his cowardice, etc. He is, indeed, a man of many calamities. But his calamities are of a comic nature. Much of the talk of Joseph Poorgrass is also funny. For instance, he defends himself against the charge of being drunk by saying that he is afflicted with a multiplying eye and, therefore, sees double. Similarly, he amuses us when he refers to the advantages of illness by saying that once a bad leg made it possible for him to read *The Pilgrim's Progress*. *Jan Coggan* is also a source of comedy. He has a great weakness for drink. (This weakness is also shared by Joseph Poorgrass). It is Jan Coggan who tells us a few funny stories about Joseph Poorgrass. Jan Coggan had acted as chief witness and as best man at marriages for the past twenty years and frequently filled the post of head god-father at baptismal ceremonies. *Henery Fray* amuses us by insisting upon a wrong spelling of his name and

by telling Bathsheba that her two women workers are a pair of "yielding women." He calls them "a scarlet pair" in order to convey the idea of their loose character. The old *maltster* is funny because of his vanity in being a very old man. He wishes to be regarded as older than he really is. His talk is also full of unconscious humour. *Cain Ball* is another interesting fellow who cannot cure himself of his habit of swallowing food while running and whose account of his visit to Bath is quite funny. *Mark Clark* is the type of person whom to meet anywhere would be to know, to know would be to drink with, to drink with would be to pay for. *Laban Tall* is a henpecked husband who is completely dominated by his wife. Thus the conversation and the oddities of all the rustic characters constitute a very rich source of comedy in the love.

Gabriel Oak as a source of comedy : Gabriel Oak also has his funny side. Hardy's sketch of Oak in the first chapter is quite amusing. We are told that Oak goes to church on Sundays not from any religious motives but merely as a formality. During the sermons he often yawns. When his friends are pleased with him, they call him a good man; when they are displeased with him, they call him a bad man; and when they are neither pleased nor displeased, they call him partly good and partly bad. We are also amused by the watch that he carries, a watch that is big enongh to be called a small clock and that is quite useless as an instrument for indicating time. Gabriel's manner of pleading his case to Bathsheba when he proposes marriage to her is funny. He tempts her by painting a bright picture of her future with him and tells her that he will advertise the birth of her babies in a newspaper. Gabriel also amuses us when, on one occasion, having been handed over a dirty cup he says that he does not mind dirt in its pure condition. His decision never to play on his flute in the presence of Bathsheba, too, is funny because one of the rustics has told him that he looks ugly when playing upon the flute.

Humour of the statements and remarks scattered in the course of the the narration and in bits of dialogue : There are a large number of miscellaneous remarks and comments that Hardy makes in the course of the story and that are

quite funny. A few of these remarks and bits of dialogue may be quoted.

(*i*) "The young woman yawned, whereupon Gabriel caught the infection and slightly yawned in sympathy."

(*ii*) Gabriel : "My name is Gabriel Oak."

Bathsheba: "And mine is'nt. You seem fond of yours in speaking it so decisively, Gabriel Oak."

Gabriel : "You see, it is the only one I should ever have and I must make the most of it."

Bathsheba: "I always think mine sounds odd and disagreeable."

Gabriel : "I think you might soon get a new one."

(*iii*) "Oak put a lamb into a respectable Sunday basket and walked across the field to the house of Mrs. Hurst, the aunt—George, the dog walking behind with a countenance of great concern at the serious turn pastoral affairs seemed to be taking."

(*iv*) "The dog took no notice, for he had arrived at an age at which all superficial barking was cynically avoided as a waste of breath."

(*v*) "This dog had originally belonged to a shepherd of inferior morals and dreadful temper, and the result was that he knew the exact degrees of condemantion signified by cursing and swearing of all descriptions better than the wickedest old man in the neighbourhood."

(*vi*) "On the extreme summit, Gabriel saw the younger dog standing against the sky—dark and motionless as Napolean at St. Helena."

(*vii*) "The bailiff who showed a nervous dread of loving his neighbour as himself, went up the hill."

(*viii*) "Women seem to have eyes in their ribbons to see whether men are looking at them with desire and admiration."

(*ix*) "She was at this moment coolly dealing with a dashing young farmer, adding up accounts with him as indifferently as if his face had been the pages of a ledger."

(*x*) "Henery Fray spoke with an oriental indifference to the flight of time."

(*xi*) "None of the workmen at sheep shearing was clothed to any extent worth mentioning, each appearing to have hit in the manner of raiment the decent mean between a high and low caste Hindu."

(*xii*) "Perfect one I don't expect to get at my time of life. If I could hear of such a thing, would do me more good than toast and ale."

(*xiii*) Troy could be one thing and seem another ; for instance, he could speak of love and think of dinner ; call at the husband to look at the wife ; be eager to pay and intend to owe.........He had been known to observe casually that in dealing with womankind the only alternative to flattery was cursing and swearing. There was not third method. "Treat them fairly, and you are a lost man", he would say.

(*xiv*) The manner in which the customers were expected to indicate their needs at Buck's Head tavern is funny. The following formulas had to be kept in mind:

'Rap with the bottom of your pint for more liquor.
For tobbaco, shout.
In calling for the girl in waiting, say, "maid."
Ditto for the laud-lady, "old soul" ! etc., etc.

It has to be noted that all the humour that Hardy provides in the course of the story is connected either with the rustic characters or with Gabriel Oak who is a superior kind of rustic. No humour at all has been provided at the cost of Farmer Boldwood or Bathsheba, the reason being that they are intended to be victims of tragedy and not, even to

a small extent, sources of humour. The element of humour serves to relieve the tension in the otherwise serious and tragic story. The element of humour in this novel also shows Hardy's rich comic genius. Hardy is generally regarded as a great tragedian but it should not be forgotten that he is a master of comedy also. He has a keen and sharp eye for the oddities, absurdities, and eccentricities of human beings.

————

CHAPTER XX

3. CHARACTER-SKETCHES OF *FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD*

1. Bathsheba Everdene

A heroine : Bathsheba is the heroine of the novel. She possesses most of the qualities that a heroine in a novel generally possesses. But she is not a perfect or an ideal woman. She has not only her accomplishments and her virtues but also her faults and shortcomings. In spite of her shortcomings and deficiencies, she wins our love and admiration. She is perhaps one of the best heroines created by Thomas Hardy.

Her vanity : The very first characteristic of Bathsheba which is revealed to us in the story is her vanity. She is conscious of her beauty and her physical charm. Thinking herself to be alone while on her way to her aunt's house at Norcombe Hill, she looks at herself in the mirror and blushes to find that she is as beautiful as she thought herself to be. This vanity is emphasised subsequently in the course of the story. She has a vain woman's desire to be looked at, to be admired and to be loved by men. When she first visits the Casterbridge-market, she is the object of all male eyes. But she feels wounded to see that one man, Farmer Boldwood, is completely and utterly indifferent to her. After Boldwood has received the valentine, he too stares at Bathsheba and finding this man to have fallen a victim to her charms, she feels very happy and regards it as a triumph of her beauty.

Her love of flattery : Bathsheba is extremely susceptible to flattery. It is mainly by his flattering remarks and compliments that Troy captures her heart. She cannot imagine that Troy may have a motive in flattering her nor does she think his flattery to be excessive. Her mind lingers upon the

praises of her beauty spoken by Troy in the course of her first, accidental meeting with Troy as also in the course of subsequent meetings. As Hardy points out, one reason why her heart never warmed up to the pleadings and appeals of Boldwood was that he had never told her even once that she was beautiful. Boldwood's failure to flatter her was a fatal mistake on his part. Her vanity so blinds Bathsheba that she does not realise the superficial nature of Troy's flattery.

Her jealousy : She was by nature an extremely jealous woman. Jealousy is almost a universal fault of women and Bathsheba is not free from it. In fact it is chiefly on account of this jealousy that she succumbs to the pressure of Troy and marries him. At Bath she is told by Troy that he has met another woman more beautiful than she and that if she does not marry him, he might marry the other woman. This excites her jealousy which drives her to marry him. Bathsheba feels jealous also of the dead Fanny. If she had controlled her jealousy, the separation between her and Troy would not have taken place. If she had handled the situation more tactfully, she could have retained Troy. But she was overcome by a fit of jealousy when she saw Troy kissing the dead Fanny.

Her wildnesss and her impulsive nature : Bathsheba, at least in the early stages of the story is a wild, impulsive girl. Hardy tells us that hers was "an impulsive nature under a deliberative aspect". In other words, though she seemed to act after due consideration and reflection, she actualy acted thoughtlessly and impulsively. She was an Elizabeth in brain and a Mary Stuart in spirit and she often performed the most rash actions with a manner of extreme thoughtfulness. Her aunt says about her, "You see, Farmer Oak, she is so good looking and an excellent scholar besides—she was going to be a governess once, you know, *only she was too wild*". Bathsheba herself says in reply to Gabriel Oak's proposal of marriage, "It won't do Mr. Oak. I want somebody to tame me ; I am too independent". One of her own workmen remarks about her, "A head-strong maid, that's what she is—and won't listen to any advice at all. Pride and vanity have ruined many a cobbler's dog". Hardy tells us that her chief fault was that she made no attempt to control her feelings by any

thought of consequences. That is why she was so easily lured into marrying Troy. Hardy says that she could show others the steep and thorny way, but "recked not her own rede." The valentine that she sent to Boldwood is also an example of her thoughtless impulsive nature. She could not foresee the consequences of this rash action. Subsequently she had to regret this thoughtless deed.

Her temper : It has already been pointed out above that Bathsheba is by temperament wild. We see her outbursts of temper on various occasions. Twice she grows furious while talking to Gabriel. On one occasion when he tells her that she should not have played a coquettish trick on Farmer Boldwood, she flares up and dismisses him on the spot. On the second occasion, Gabriel warns her against Troy and this time also she grows indignant and furious and orders him to leave her at once. On another occasion she loses her temper with her women-servants whom she has overheard speaking ill of Troy. She storms and shouts and a little later bursts into a flood of tears. It must, however, be said to her credit that each time she loses her temper, she makes amends to the person concerned. She expresses her regret even to Liddy for having shouted and screamed at her.

Her romantic temperament : Bathsheba has a deeply emotional nature and highly romantic temperament. That is the reason why she is bewitched and fascinated by Troy. Troy is himself a romantic person and his way of talking, his smart and attractive appearance, his skill in swordsmanship, are the very qualities to stir a romantic imagination. It is due to this characteristic of Bathsheba that she is swept off her feet by the dash of Troy while she is quite blind to the solid and sterling qualities of the homely Gabriel Oak. She is quite conscious of Oak's loyalty and devotion to her but she takes it for granted, as her due from one who loves and admires her in his own quiet, reserved manner.

Her practical sense, self-confidence, efficient supervision of her farm, etc. : We must admire this woman for the tremendous self-confidence and for the practical sense that she displays when she suddenly finds herself the mistress of a big farm. Gabriel Oak is surprised at the rapidity with which

the unpractised, unexperienced girl of Norcombe has developed into the cool and supervising woman of Weatherbury. But, as Hardy says, some women only require an opportunity to bring out their hidden qualities. When she catches Pennyways stealing, she flies at him like a cat and dismisses him on the spot, thus showing a manly courage and promptness of decision. After the dismissal of the bailiff, she herself takes charge of the farm. She tells her workmen that she has formed a resolution to have no bailiff but to manage everything with her own head and hands. She gives them a warning, "Don't any unfair ones among you suppose that because I am a woman I don't understand the difference between bad goings-on and good. I shall be up before you are awake ; I shall be afield before you are up, and I shall have breakfasted before you are afield." Not only does she show a remarkable courage, self-confidence and efficiency in dealing with her own workmen, but the same qualities are seen when she attends the market at Casterbridge where she is the only woman-farmer. She walks about among the farmers without in the least feeling conscious of her sex. She has self-confidence enough to speak and reply boldly to the men farmers. In arguing on prices she holds to her own firmly and tries to reduce theirs persistently. The men appreciate her for the way in which she carries herself at the market. Again, she personally supervises such operations as sheep-washing, sheep-shearing, harvesting, hay-making, etc. She knows the art of hiving the bees. She personally attends to the safety of her corn ricks. At the time of the fire in the middle of the night she is personally at the spot. When a heavy rain is expected, she herself goes to see to the safety of the ricks while her husband is lying drunk. Her almost manly courage is also seen in the manner in which she handles the dead body of Troy. She had the body removed to her own house even though the law required the body to be allowed to remain there before the coroner's inquest. She removes Troy's garments and dresses the dead body in grave-clothes. This is what the surgeon says about her; "The body has been undressed and properly laid out in grave-clothes. Gracious Heaven—this mere girl ! She must have the nerve of a stoic."

Her sympathetic nature: Bathsheba has a deeply sympathetic nature. She is filled with deep sorrow at the sad plight of the sheep which had burst into a field of young clover and got poisoned. She has to surrender her pride by seeking Gabriel's help to save the lives of the unhappy sheep. Likewise, she feels a great sympathy for Boldwood in his miserable condition. It is more out of pity than from any inclination that she gives him a promise to marry him seven years after the date of Troy's disappearance. She experiences a genuine sympathy for this man. Again, the tragic end of Fanny arouses her deepest sympathy. It is true that she feels jealous of Fanny but the feeling of sympathy is undoubtedly there.

Her dignity, her maidenly purity, her endurance, her candour: In spite of her vanity and love of flattery, we must admit that she is by no means a flirt. She is no schemer for marriage. She is not a deliberate trifler with the affections of men. She looks very much like what a flirt is supposed to be, but she does not play with the hearts of men. She combines coquetry with dignity and vanity with a high seriousness. Until she meets Troy, she is proud of her maidenly purity; until then her lips had been touched by no man's on earth and her waist had never been encircled by a lover's arm. She had never by look, word or sign encouraged a man to approach her. This is certainly something for which we must praise her. She also shows a rare self-control in her greatest misfortune. She shows a firmness and a power of endurance when Troy speaks cruelly to her and then deserts her. Even after Troy's death, she bears her widowhood with calmness and courage. It is for this reason that Hardy says that she belongs to the category of women who become mothers of heroes. She is completely free from any deceit or guile. She is outspoken and straigtforward. She never does anything in a secretive or furtive manner. It is true that she tries to pay stealthy visit to Bath to meet Troy but her motive in going there is perfectly honourable. Her original intention in going there was to bid a final farewell to Troy. As Hardy says, "It was not Bathsheba's way to do things furtively. With all her faults she was candour itself."

Conclusion: The above survey shows that Bathsheba suffers from a plenty of faults and weaknesses but at the same time she possesses certain qualities which greatly raise her in our estimation and regard. Her practical sense, her courage, her self-confidence, her firmness, her endurance of misfortune, her maidenly purity, her guilelessness make her worthy of a heroine. There is no taint of wickedness in her. She means no harm to anyone and injures nobody. She is essentially good. Her love of Troy cannot be called a serious fault. A man like Troy would capture the heart of any woman, especially a romantic minded woman. It may be an error of judgment on the part of Bathsheba but where the heart is concerned, judgment is generally suspended.

2. Gabriel Oak

The hero: Gabriel Oak is, undoubtedly, the hero of the novel. He is introduced to us on the very first page of the book and remains with us till the last page. Hardy has spent more space and more pains on depicting Oak's character than the character of any other male figure in the story. Apart from this, the man possesses several qualities which endear him to us and which make us admire and respect him.

His devotion to Bathsheba and his sense of duty: Perhaps his most striking quality is his loyalty and devotion to Bathsheba. He is as solid and dependable as the oak tree whose name he bears. As a lover, his passion is not transient or short-lived like that of Troy, nor is his love as possessive as that of Boldwood. As a lover, his ideal is that of service to his mistress. He treats love as an enduring, lasting passion which knows how to give without any expectation of any return. He is a silent, undemonstrative type of lover. He does not know how to flatter a woman nor does he know the art of pleading his love. *His fidelity to Bathsheba is remarkable*. From the time that he saves her corn-ricks from fire without knowing that the owner of the ricks is Bathsheba, till the very end he serves Bathsheba whole heartedly and ungrudgingly. Though he is employed as her shepherd, yet in actual fact he performs all the duties of a bailiff. He superintends her farm and her property without in any way making a show of the service that he is rendering, so much so that

in the initial stages Bathsheba does not even know the amount of work he is doing in her service. He saves her corn-ricks from rain and strom by working single-handed when all the other men including Troy are lying heavily drunk in the barn. He exposes himself to a great risk from lightning but he does so without any sense that he is doing any special favour to Bathsheba. Nor is Bathsheba blind to the services that he renders to her. In fact, towards the later stages, she leaves the entire charge of her farm to Oak. He becomes indispensable to her. Therefore, when he decides to leave her service, Bathsheba feels greatly worried. She calls at his house to ask the reason why he is leaving. On this occasion, in the course of conversation their union is decided upon. We see the essential sincerity of his nature not only in the manner in which he looks after the farm of Bathsheba, but also the way in which he serves Boldwood. In the case of Bathsheba we could say that it was his love for the woman that prompted him to serve her, but his selfless service of Boldwood leaves no doubt in our minds that the man is temperamentally loyal and has a strong sense of duty. In fact, he places duty before anything else. He scolds Joseph Poorgrass when the latter delays the coffin of Fanny by stopping to drink at a road-side tavern. *His conscientious regard for duty* is one of his foremost qualities.

His simplicity: Gabriel Oak is an extremely simple-minded person. He is completely free from all deceit, guile, and trickery. He is so simple-minded as to be almost tactless. When he tells Bathsheba's aunt, that he wants to marry Bathsheba he does so without any preface, The moment Bathsheba's aunt says that Bathsheba has a dozen or more admirers, he beats a hasty retreat. He is tactless enough to tell Bathsheba that he had seen her masculine antics on horse-back while she was riding to town. He also tells her when she gives him her hand that he was not thinking of kissing it—a tactless remark which naturally offends her. When subsequently he tells her his prospects in life so as to prevail upon her to marry him, he tactlessly says that he had previously been thinking of marrying a woman with money. Even towards the end of the novel, it is Bathsheba who more or less, takes the initiative in prompting him to

propose marriage to her. *He is a reserved, reticent type of lover.*

His straightforwardness: Gabriel Oak is quite outspoken and straightforward. He chides his mistress for having played a coquettish trick on Boldwood. He frankly tells her that her behaviour has been most objectionable. On one occasion Bathsheba dismisses him from service for this outspokenness. He does not mince matters even to please Bathsheba. When on a second occasion she asks him to quit her service, he reminds her of his pervious dismissal and re-appointment, and refuses to leave.

Endurance of misfortune: Gabriel has a philosophic attitude towards life. He endures his misfortunes calmly and resolutely. When his dog has driven his sheep over the precipice and he finds them all lying dead at the foot of the hill, he does not curse his luck. In fact, he thanks God that he is not married. He bears this loss courageously and after disposing of his belongings, sets out in search of a job. Unable to find employment at the hiring-fair, he feels no shame in making a little money by playing upon his flute—an art in which he is well versed. He shows the same patience in his love for Bathsheba. Though she does not respond to him for a long time, he does not feel gloomy or depressed like Boldwood. Even when Bathsheba is married to Troy, he does not complain or grumble. When subsequently Boldwood is wooing her, he does not put forward his claims. Though his love is disappointed for a long time, he remains calm and courageous.

An expert shepherd: He is well versed in all the arts of a shepherd. In fact he possesses an exceptional skill as a shepherd. He attends his own sheep and subsequently Bathsheba's sheep with a great care and affection. He is an adept in sheep-washing, sheep-shearing, etc. When Bathsheba's sheep have burst into a field af young clover and have got poisoned he is the only person in Weatherbury who can save their lives by performing a skilful operation on them to let out their blood. He also shows a great ingenuity and skill in saving the ricks of Bathsheba first from fire and

then from rain and storm. He possesses a creditable knowledge of the position of the various stars in the sky, and can judge the hour of night or day by looking at the position of the stars or the sun.

His self-respect: Though he loves Bathsheba deeply, he is not without self-respect even in his relations with her. When she dismisses him from service for his frank condemnation of her conduct towards Boldwood he immediately goes away. When Bathsheba sends him a signal of distress, he refuses to come unless he is asked to come with more politeness. It is only when Bathsheba sends him a written appeal that he agrees to come. He is not the cringing type of lover who would efface his dignity and self-respect for the whims of his mistress.

His kindness and sympathy: He is by nature kind-hearted and sympathetic. He feels very sad at the premature and tragic end of his two hundred sheep. When he meets Fanny Robin by chance, without knowing the girl, he offers her a shilling on seeing her distress even though he is himself a needy person at that time. Later on he feels a great sympathy for Boldwood in the latter's disappointment in love and his sad fate. When Boldwood was trying to court and win Bathsheba, Gabriel did not enter into any rivalry with him but kept his own love under control.

His modesty and humility: Gabriel Oak is a modest and humble person. As Hardy tells, he walks about as if he does not have much claim upon the room of this earth. Even when he has become Bathsheba's bailiff, he does not try to boss over the workmen. He does not lose his head. At no stage in the story do we find him swollen with pride or with a feeling of his importance. His work and services are valuable, but he does not seem to be conscious of his own worth. He does not parade either his skill as a shepherd or his worth as a bailiff. This humility or modesty lends a further charm to his personality.

His literary taste: He is not an illiterate or uneducated person. He is a man of literary taste. He has a small collection of books from which he derives knowledge as well as pleasure. His collection includes *Paradise Lost, The*

Pilgrim's Progress, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *The Youngman's Best Companion*. He had acquired more sound information from these books by close study than many men of opportunities do from a big library. His literary taste gives him a certain refinement and culture and raises him much above various rustic characters in the story.

His funny side : Gabriel Oak is not without his funny side. Hardy's description of this man in the first chapter is to a large extent comic. We are told that he was a man of general good character on working days, that he went to church on Sundays not from any religious motives but merely as a formality, that during the sermons he often yawned. When his friends were pleased with him, they thought him a good man ; when they were displeased with him, they thought him a bad man ; when they were neither pleased nor displeased, they thought him partly good and partly bad. He carried a watch which was so big that it could be called a small clock. This instrument was several years older than Oak's grand-father. Being too old, it had lost its value as a watch because either it went too fast or not at all. Then again he had a way of walking which seemed to curtail his dimensions. His height and his breadth could have lent a certain dignity and importance to his body but he could not make proper use of his dimensions. Gabriel's extreme simplicity and tactlessness, which we have already noted above, are also a source of amusement to us. On one occasion when he was handed a dirty cup, he remarked that he did not mind dirt as long as it was pure. We also feel amused when he makes up his mind never to play on his flute in the presence of Bathsheba because someone has told him that he looks ugly when playing upon the flute.

It may be pointed out, further, that Oak was no puritan. He liked a drink and a chat in the Malthouse but he was not excessively addicted to drink like the other, workmen. He took his pleasures in moderation.

3. Sergeant Troy

An exceptional being : Sergeant Troy was no ordinary person. He was an exceptional being. His circumstances

and his temperamental inclinations had combined to make him exceptional.

Lived in the present : Sergeant Troy believed essentially in the present. He was neither interested in the past nor in the future. Memories of the past were a burden to him and expectations about the future were irrelevant. He felt and cared for what was before his eyes only. That being so, he could be regarded as one of the most fortunate persons in the world, because memories are really a disease while expectations generally bring about disappointment. What he never enjoyed he never missed ; but he knew that he enjoyed what most people missed.

A dissembler : He was moderately truthful towards men. But to women he told extravagant lies. This habit used to win him popularity at the very outset of his entrance in any form of society. He was a fairly well-educated man. He spoke fluently and unceasingly. He had the knack of being one thing and seeming antoher. For intance, he would speak of love and think of dinner; he could call on the husband to look at the wife; he would seem eager to pay and really want somebody else to pay. Thus he was a dissembler.

His vices : He had vices but his vices were not of the kind that could quickly come to notice. For this reason, though his morals had never been praised, disapproval of his morals had frequently been softened with a smile. His vices were often the off-spring of impulse while his virtuous conduct was always the result of cool meditation. He gambled, he drank, and he sought the pleasures of love.

A flatterer : Sergeant Troy had a wonderful power of flattering women. He would flatter a woman in the most extravagant terms in order to charm her and win her. It was chiefly by his exaggerated compliments that he produced a favourable effect upon the mind of Bathsheba. On his very first, accidental meeting with her, he said that he was thankful to her for giving him an opportunity to see her beatuiful face. Even when Bathsheba scolded him for speaking so familiarly to her, he said that he was thankful for beauty even when it was thrown to him like a bone to a dog. He told her that he had never seen a woman as beautiful as she. On his next

meeting with her, he paid more compliments to her and sought her permission to talk to her off and on. He said that she was the type of woman with whom a hundred men would fall in love. But the climax to this flattery of Bathsheba was reached in his thrusting his gold watch upon her as a gift. He told her that her beauty had struck him instantaneously just as lightning strikes instantaneously. Indeed, he flattered her so much on this occasion, that she was filled with a perplexed excitement. In this respect, Troy was different from both Gabriel Oak and Boldwood. Neither Oak nor Boldwood had the art of flattering a woman. Troy believed that in dealing with women the only alternative to flattery was cursing and swearing. There was for him no third method. He believed that if a man treated women fairly, he would be lost.

His treatment of Fanny and of Bathsheba: We cannot forgive Sergeant Troy for his villainous conduct towards Fanny Robin. He seduced her after giving her assurances of marriage and then took her appeals for marriage lightly. It is true that he did make an appointment with her in order to marry her and that it was Fanny's own fault that she failed to keep that appointment. But Sergeant Troy felt more relief than regret at Fanny's failure to keep the appointment with him at the fixed hour. If he had been genuine or sincere, he could have made another appointment with Fanny. But it is quite clear that he had merely been flirting with Fanny for pleasure and not because he loved her truly. By failing to marry her, he was directly responsible for Fanny's most tragic and heart-rending end. Likewise, his love for Bathsheba was also a fleeting passion. As soon as he had tasted her beauty, he seemed to tire of her. His initial ardent manner as a lover soon changed into a matter-of-fact, routine attitude towards her. Therefore, after Fanny's death he left Bathsheba without much hesitation.

His remorse: In assessing Sergeant Troy's moral character, we must take into account the remorse and the repentance that he experienced when he saw the dead body of Fanny. He had made a sincere effort to contact Fanny and had taken some money with him also to help her in her distress. The sight of the dead Fanny aroused his conscience and he felt that he could not forgive himself for his wickedness. He

said that, in the eyes of Heaven, Fanny was his true wife and that Bathsheba was nothing to him. A ceremony before a priest, he said, could not make Bathsheba his wife. He erected a tombstone on the grave of Fanny and planted flowers there. His conscience rebuked him so severely for his faithlessness towards Fanny that he decided not to live any longer with Bathsheba. All this we have to admit. But these are poor amends for the wrongs he had done to Fanny. He was guitly of an unpardonable crime against womankind. No matter how leniently we try to judge him, we cannot exonerate him of his guilt. His romantic and sentimental conduct after the death of Fanny has very little meaning and as for his deciding not to live with Bathsheba any more, he would have left her in any case because he had begun to tire of Bathsheba.

A selfish man : In fact he was not the sort of man who could stick to any woman. In his love of women, he was utterly selfish and was led merely by his passion and his lust and not by any sincerity or loyalty. His desertion of Fanny is inexcusable. His subsequent treatment of Bathsheba is also reprehensible. Ultimately, the motives which prompted him to return to Bathsheba were mean and ignoble. He returned to Bathsheba not because of any love for her but because he had failed to earn a decent living. We feel that the end he meets is richly deserved by him. We feel not the least regret when Boldwood shoots him dead.

His social charm : We cannot deny that Sergeant Troy possessed a certain personal charm which women found irresistable. Apart from his skill in flattering women, he was a dashing young soldier. He was an accomplished swordsman. Indeed his sword-play had as much part in captivating the heart of Bathsheba as his flattery. His handsome appearance, his smartness, his dash, his art of conversation and of flattery are combined to make him a lady killer. But his faults were more numerous then his accomplishments. He was a liar; he was unscruplous ; he was callous, he was selfish he was faithless, fickle and inconstant ; he was a gambler anda drunkard. Indeed, we should have no hesitation in calling him the villain of the story.

4. Farmer Boldwood

His seriousness of mind: Farmer Boldwood is depicted as an unusually serious, solemn, sober, sedate person. He led a life of philosophic aloofness. He presents a sharp contrast to Sergeant Troy's gay nature, optimism and lively interest in the world. Boldwood was a gloomy person. He never enjoyed any of the pleasures of life. He never mixed with people ; had no social contacts and he led a solitary life. He had been known for a long time as a confirmed bachelor. He had never shown any interest in women, though it was rumoured that his unusual seriousness and indifference to women were the result of some early disappointment in love. Whatever be the reason of his indifference to women, he had been known to be averse to their company. Several girls tried to win his heart but he had remained unmoved. He did not even take any notice of Bathsheba when she made her first appearance in Casterbridge market among the farmers. In fact, his indifference wounded Bathsheba's vanity. Farming, buying, selling were Boldwood's only concern. This abnormal nature of Boldwood was due to some touch of insanity that he had inherited from an ancestor. An uncle of his, we learn, suffered from insanity.

His passion for Bathsheba: The valentine, which Bathsheba had sent to Boldwood unthinkingly, caused a great stir in the depths of Boldwood's heart. The words "Marry me" produced a strange effect upon him. He could not forget the letter or its contents. In fact, the valentine completely occupied his thoughts. After learning from Gabriel that the handwriting on the valentine was that of Bathsheba, his curiosity about the writer was further aroused. On the following market day in Casterbridge, therefore, Boldwood looked at Bathsheba greedily. She was the disturber of his dreams. It was as if Adam had awakened from his deep sleep and suddenly seen Eve. He inspected Bathsheba closely and thought her beautiful. His eyes followed her wherever she went. He had conceived a passion for this woman. This passion soon developed into a mania. His mental equilibrium had been disturbed. His nature was

such that either he felt no emotion or an emotion ruled him completely. He took the earliest opportunity to contact Bathsheba and to tell her of his passion for her. He pleaded his case with great emphasis and sincerity and proposed marriage to her, though in vain. But even her refusal did not diminish his passion. Nothing mattered to him now except Bathsheba. Once again he pressed her to agree to be his wife but that also did not yield any fruit. Subsequently she married Troy and Boldwood lost all interest in life. He became indifferent to his farm and he felt gloomy all the time. His hope of marrying Bathsheba revived when Troy was reported to have been drowned. Now he was ready to wait for seven years in order to marry Bathsheba. But his passion was not to be fulfilled and he met a sad fate. Indeed we are astonished at the volcanic passion that lay beneath the tranquil and calm exterior of Boldwood. When these volcanic fires were ignited, nothing could bring them under control. He paid a heavy price for being so abnormally passionate.

The touch of insanity : There is not much doubt of the streak of insanity in Boldwood's nature. The mercy petition that was addressed to the Home Secretary on Boldwood's behalf was based upon definite evidence of that touch of insanity. In a locked closet was found an extraordinary collection of articles. There were several sets of ladies dresses, silks and satins, poplins and velvets ; there was a case of jewellery, bracelets and lockets and rings, all of fine quality and manufacture. These things Boldwood had been buying from time to time and keeping them in a closet in anticipation of his marriage with Bathsheba. All these articles were carefully packed in paper and each package was labelled "Bathsheba Boldwood". This was definite evidence of a mind crazed with love. There is, no doubt, that his passion for Bathsheba was responsible for this mental derangement.

His sympathatic nature : Boldwood was essentially a kind hearted man. He had acted as a guardian to Fanny Robin and he had got her a job under Bathshebas's uncle. His concern at the disappearence of Fanny was great. Subsequently he felt very sad to learn of the tragic end of Fanny.

An essentially good man: Leaving aside Boldwood's wild and uncontrollable passion for Bathsheba, we must admit that he was a thorough gentleman. He was fair in his dealings with everyone. He offered Gabriel a share in his farm. Hs also expressed his appreciation of Gabriel's conduct in keeping his love for Bathsheba under conrol and not entering into a rivalry with Boldwood over Bathsheba. He was respected by all. There was nothing crooked or dishonest about him. Indeed we feel sorry for him when he is sentenced to death and heave a sigh of relief when his sentence is commuted to imprisonment during Her Majesty's pleasure. The people in Weatherbury also felt much relief on learning that Boldwood was not to be hanged. Nor can we blame him much for his shooting of Troy. It was only when he found that Bathsheba was unwilling to go with Troy and Troy was using force with her that he fired the gun. After shooting Troy, he wanted to shoot himself also, and failing to do that he went straight to the police station and surrendered himself. In the court he confessed his guilt and did not try to put up any defence or any excuses.

5. The Rustic Characters

(*Joseph Poorgrass, Jan Coggan, Henery Fray, the old Maltster etc.*)

The function of the rustic characters : In almost every novel of Hardy, there is, besides the principal characters, a group of rustic figures. The rustic characters in the novels of Hardy do not contribute much to the plot ; they are not integral to the plot. But they are a part and parcel of the country background against which the vicissitudes in the lives of the principal characters are depicted. The rustic characters are also a source of comedy in the otherwise tragic stories. Their conversation is full of a droll humour, which relieves the tension of the story. In the course of their conversation, the rustic characters often comment on the actions and temperaments of the principal figures in the story and often provide us with information about the latter. The rustic group in *Far From The Madding Crowd* includes Joseph Poorgrass, Jan Coggan, Henery Fray, Mark Clark,

Jacob Smallbury, William Smallbury, Matthew Moon, the old maltster Laban Tall and Cain Ball. Each of them has been individualised. Each of them unconsciously contributes to the humour of the novel. Joseph Poorgrass has been sketched in greater detail than any of the other rustics.

The Rustic Characters as a Source of Humour.

(*i*) *Joseph Poorgrass* : Joseph Poorgrass is perhaps the greatest source of humour in the novel. He is self-conscious, modest, bashful person. As he himself says, he does not have the courage to look at the face of Bathsheba. If he does look at her face, he is all blushes. His shyness is, indeed, a curious defect in him. He says that he has suffered from this defect ever since he was a boy. All possible methods were employed to cure him of it but in vain. His parents tried all sorts of company for him. He was taken to Green Hill Fair where he was shown plenty of women scantily dressed but that had no effect upon his shyness. Then he was put as an errand man at a place which was full of sinful men and women but even that was no use. He says that blushes have been in his family for generations. We are amused when he says with reference to Bathsheba, "It were blush, blush, blush with me every minute of the time when she was speaking to me." Jacob Smallbury says that this shyness is a bad affliction for Joseph Poorgrass.

Joseph Poorgrass amuses us also by his timid nature. Jan Coggon tells us that he is the fearfulest man. Coggan relates two amusing anecdotes about the cowardice af Joseph Poorgrass. Once; coming at night through a wood, Joseph heard an owl crying, "Whoo-whoo-whoo". Joseph thought that somebody was saying, "Who? Who? Who?" Joseph trembled with fear and replied, "Joseph Poorgrass of Weatherbury, Sir." Joseph Poorgrass admits the truth of the story but says that he never said "Sir". The second story that Coggan tells us is of Joseph's difficulty in opening a gate. Joseph thought that there was the devil's hand in it and so he knelt before the gate in an attitude of prayer to drive away the devil. Joseph Poorgrass confirms this story and elaborates it by saying that, kneeling before the gate, he said the Lord's Prayer and mentally recited many portions from the Bible

till at last the gate did open. Joseph's superstitious nature too amuses us. When news is brought about the running away of Fanny and the dismissal of the bailiff, Joseph says that he had been hearing the news-bell ringing in his left ear and that he had seen a maggie all alone. Another funny story about Joseph Poorgrass is given to us by Matthew Moon who says that when Joseph was employed to paint the name of Farmer James Everdene on the latter's waggons Joseph never knew which way to turn the J's and E's. Joseph says that he was not much to be blamed for it. J's and E's are such difficult sons of witches for the memory to remember whether they face backward or forward. Joseph says that he always had such a forgetful memory. Indeed, as Matthew Moon says, Joseph Poorgrass is a man of many calamities. But we must not forget that Joseph's calamities are of a comic nature.

Much of the talk of Joseph Poorgrass is marked by an unconscious humour. He tells Bathsheba in reply to a question that he is "the personal name of Poorgrass". When asked what he is, he replies that he is nothing in his own eye but that in the eyes of other people he is something, though his modesty prevents him from dwelling upon his importance. Joseph's comment on the tunes played by Gabriel is also interesting. Joseph is thankful to God that Gabriel is not a player of indecent songs. "Yes, for our 'wives and daughters' sake we should feel really thanks-giving that he is not a player of indecent songs", says Joseph. Poorgrass amuses us also when he refers to the advantages of illness. "It was a bad leg which allowed me to read the *Pilgrim's Progress*. And Mark Clark learnt All—Fours in a Whitlow." In spite of his extreme shyness and modesty, Joseph can entertain the company with his singing. When he is asked to sing on the occasion of the shearing-supper and is told that Bathsheba is looking at him, he says that he cannot avoid blushing when a beautiful woman's eyes are fixed upon him. Joseph Poorgrass is excessively fond of drinking. His propensity to drink delays him at Buck's Head. There at the tavern he gets drunk but does not admit that he is drunk. When Gabriel scolds him for being drunk, he replies," No, Shepherd, no ! Listen to reason, shepherd. All that's the

matter with me is the affliction called a multiplying eye, and that's how it is I look double to you—I mean, you look double to me". He does not realize that he sees double because of too much drink. Then he actually begins to shed tears of self-pity. Indeed his talk and behaviour at the tavern on this occasion are most funny.

(*ii*) *Jan Coggan*: Jan Coggan comes next in importance to Joseph Poorgrass among the rustic characters. We are amused to learn that Jan Coggan is a person who holds strong views of equality where sharing of liquor is concerned. It is he who tells us a couple of funny stories about Joseph Poorgrass. Even though Poorgrass tries to stop him, he goes on because he believes that a "true narrative, like time and tide, must run its course and would respect no man". This man, Jan Coggan, had attended practically every marriage that had been held in the village for the past twenty years and had acted as a chief witness and as best man. He also very frequently filled the post of head god-father at baptismal ceremonies. The story that he tells us about himself is also funny. He used to go to court a dairy-maid employed under Farmer Everdene. Farmer Everdene had no objection to Coggan's going to court the dairy-maid, because he thought Coggan a respectable young fellow. In fact, Farmer Everdene allowed Coggan to drink as much ale at his house as Coggan liked. Coggan wanted to drink the maximum possible quantity every time he went to the farmer's house and, therefore, he used to eat a lot of salt fish before going there in order to make himself as thirsty as possible. He also says that in Farmer Everdene's kitchen no oaths were allowed. One could not even use the word "damn". It was a great hardship because, says Coggan, a sinful word or an oath employed now and then is a great relief to merry soul. The girl whom he used to woo having died, Coggan remarks that he is doubtful whether she went to heaven. She was an unlucky woman and must have gone to hell, thinks Coggan.

Jan Coggan is partly responsible for delaying Joseph Poorgrass at the Buck's Head tavern when Joseph was taking Fanny's dead body to Weatherbury.

(*iii*) *Henery Fray* : He is a man of more than middle age. He thinks that the law of the world is bad. He always signs his name as "Henery" though the proper spelling is Henry. He insists that Henery was the name which was given to him at christening and that he would stick to it. It is Henery Fray who tells Gabriel Oak that the latter's features are twisted into an ugly shape when he plays on his flute, whereupon Oak inwardly resolves never to play on his flute in the presence of Bathsheba. When Bathsheba is paying the wages to her workmen, she asks whether the work of the two women workers, Temperance and Soberness, is satisfactory. Henery Fray, not realising that he is speaking to a lady, says that they are a pair of yielding women. He calls them a scarlet pair. What he means is that the two women are of a loose character. He is snubbed by Bathsheba and we feel amused. He also amuses us by telling Bathsheba how Cain Ball got his name. He says that Cain's mother, not being well read in the Bible made a mistake, thinking that it was Abel who killed Cain. She gave the name Cain to her son while she meant Abel all the time.

(*iv*) *The old Maltster* : He is another funny character. He amuses us by the way in which he calculates his age. He counts the summers and the winters of the same years as if they belong to different years. For instance, he says that for four years he worked at turnip-hoeing and for another four years at malting. When his son draws his attention to the fact that his turnip-hoeing was in the summers and his malting in the winters of the same years, he feels annoyed. In other words, instead of counting the period as four years, he wants it to be reckoned as eight years. He says in irritation, "Choke it all! I lived during the summers and I lived during the winters, did I not? I suppose you will say next that I may of no age at all." This curious vanity of the old maltster to be regarded as older than he really is, is very comic. We also feel amused when the old maltster intervenes in the conversation whenever he feels that he is being ignored. He recalls that when he was married to his wife, people considered him and his wife the handsomest couple in the village. He also amuses us by saying that there should not be a severe restricition upon the use of indecent words because, he

says, nature, requires the use of such words at regular times and that unholy exclamations are a necessity of life.

(*v*) *Cain Ball* : He is another interesting fellow. We have already seen how he came by his name. He was much pitied for having been given the wrong name through the ignorance of his mother. He amuses us considerably when he returns from a holiday at Bath. He gives us an account of what he saw in the city. He is coughing a good deal because he had been running and at the same time swallowing bread and ham. He is breathless and coughs after every two or three words. Gabriel rebukes him and says, "Now Cainy ! how many times must I tell you to keep from running so fast when you be eating? You will choke yourself some day, that's what you will do, Cain Ball." Cainy relates how he saw Bathsheba and a soldier walking alone, arm in arm, like a courting couple. He also says that the people of Bath never need to light their fires because the water springs out of the earth ready boiled for use. Then he talks about the large houses, the crowds of people, the grand churches and chapals, etc, that he saw. We are much amused by this rustic's impressions of a city.

(*vi*) *Mark Clark, Jacob Smallbury, Matthew Moon and Laban Tall*: These persons also contribute in a small way to the humour of the story. Mark Clark is "a genial and pleasant gentleman, who to meet anywhere would be to know, to know would be to drink with, and to drink with would be, unfortunately, to pay for." Mark Clark, with Jan Coggan' is to some extent responsible for delaying Joseph Poorgrass at the Buck's Head tavern and tempting him to drink more and more. *Jacob Smallbury*, having dropped a piece of bacon in the dust, advises Gabriel Oak not to chew it close and not to let his teeth meet fully so that he may not feel the sandiness of the bacon. This man is the son of the old maltster. He is sixty-five years old, with semi-bald head and one tooth in the left centre of his upper jaw. This solitary tooth looks very prominent, like a milestone on the road-side. *Matthew Moon* is the person who gives us the amusing story about Joseph Poorgrass's inability to paint the J's and E's correctly on the waggons. Nor should we forget *Laban Tall*. This fellow has no personality of his own.

Hardy says that this man, having no individuality worth mentioning, is known as Susan Tall's husband. He is completely dominated by his wife. When Bathsheba calls out his name in order to pay him the wages and asks him whether he would stay on working for her, his wife speaks from behind and says that he will continue to work. When Bathsheba asks who the woman is, she replies that she is Laban Tall's lawful wife. Hardy says that this woman called herself twenty-five, looked thirty, was supposed to be thirty-five but was forty years of age. When Bathsheba asks why Laban Tall does not speak for himself, his wife says that he is a simple tool and is unable to get on in life without her. All this is very funny.

The rustic characters as commentators : The rustic characters in this novel often comment on the nature, temperament, actions and doings of their superiors. Thus they comment on Bathsheba, on Bathsheba's parents, on Boldwood, etc. These comments indicate the point of view from which they look at their betters. For instance, it is from their talk that we learn that Bathsheba's father used to get up at night in order to look at the beauty of his wife. They also tell us that after getting married to the most beautiful woman, Bathsheba's father used to feel in his heart the desire to make love to other women and that it was with great difficulty that he controlled this desire. Again, it is in the course of their conversation that Bathsheba's vanity and wilfulness are emphasised. For instance, this is what William Smallbury says about her. "She is a very vain female. It is said that every night at going to bed she looks in the glass to put on her night cap properly. And she can play the piano. Can play so cleverly that she can make a religious tune sound as well as the merriest loose song a man can wish for." This is what Henery Fray says about her. "A head-strong maid, that's what she is and wont's listen to no advice at all." The old maltster wonders what she, a farmer woman, can want with a piano. He criticises her for buying everything new and not being satisfied with her dead uncle's things. The rustics also gossip about the possibility of Boldwood's marriage with Bathsheba. One of them, for instance, seeing Boldwood talking to Bathsheba, says. "That means matrimony."

Their role in the plot: The rustic characters, as has been stated above, are not essential or indispensable to the plot of the novel. If they were eliminated, the plot would not suffer much damage except at one or two places. For instance, it is because Joseph Poorgrass delays Fanny's coffin that Fanny cannot be buried and her coffin has to be placed in Bathsheba's house. This leads to that awful scene between Troy and Bathsheba and leads to the tragedy of Bathsheba's life. Thus Joseph Poorgrass who was detained in a tavern by Jan Coggan and Mark Clark, has a vital role in the plot in this respect. But on the whole the part of the rustic characters so far as the plot is concerned is inconsiderable.

The rustics as source of information : In the course of the story, the rustics prove to be a source of considerable information to the reader. For instance, it is Henery Fray who brings the news that the bailiff has been dismissed for stealing. Laban Tall brings the information that Fanny has disappeared. Billy Smallbury informs us that Fanny's lover is a soldier quartered in Casterbridge. Troy's arrival in Weatherbury to claim his wife after remaining away from her for several months is also intimated to us by the rustics.

The rustics as a part of Hardy's philosophy of life: The rustic characters in this novel serve also to illustrate a part of Hardy's philosohy of life. It is evident that while the principal characters like Boldwood and Bathsheba suffer various misfortunes, the rustic characters are on the whole a cheerful, happy and carefree lot. The afflictions of Joseph Poorgrass are of a comic nature. On the whole, the rustic characters have no troubles or sorrows. Hardy wants to convey to us his belief that only those persons are happy who have no aspirations or ambitions or desires. The rustics have hardly any aspirations. Henery Fray, no doubt, wished to become a bailiff after the dismisal of Pennyways. But even this minor aspiration is not fulfilled and he reaps disappointment. According to Hardy, a state of desirelessness is the only means to happiness in life. Gabriel Oak Boldwood, Bathsheba—all have desires and aspirations and they are unhappy. Thus the rustics have been introduced by Hardy as forming a part of the pattern of his philosophy of life.

CHAPTER XXI

1. A BRIEF OUTLINE OF *THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE*

Lional Johnson outlines the plot of the novel in the following words : "The plot of this novel commands pre-eminance over other novels of Hardy. The naked facts of the story are few and plain ; a great, wast tract of land, called Egdon Heath; Mrs. Yeobright, a widow, some degrees of higher rank than her neighbours, the peasantry ; a stern, loving, inflexible woman, her niece, Thomasin, married against Mrs. Yeobrights will to Damon Wildeve, a plausible, a pitiful fellow, once an engineer, now a small inkeeper pretty, shifty, clever, and young. Eustacia Vye, living on the Heath with her grandfather, an old seaman, after a life at Budmouth. a fashionable watering place ; Eustacia is a beautiful, fitful, imperious, discontented and inexperienced. She hates the great lovely heath, and makes an ideal of Budmouth ; and she has, half in boredam, half from self-deception and love of enslaved Wildeve. Clym Yeobright, the widows only son, comes home from jeweller's business in Paris, out of a partly Quixotic, but wholly noble, disgusted with selfish and low aim in life; a gentle, affectionate Youth, and hard as iron against all opposition to his fixed resolutions, in the matters of sentiments and conduct and Diggory Venn, an early suitor of Thamasin, once a farmer, now an itinerant 'reddleman', and still her chivalrous defender. These are the six principal characters.

"Clym intends, in a fit of revolt against ambition and worldliness, to begin some scheme of education, moral and mental, for the benefit of the peasant countrymen, to which his mother, in her pride of him, is hardly reconciled ; upon that blow follow the far greater blow of the discovery that Clym has fallen in love with, and means to marry Eustacia ;

who finding in Clym a finer likeness to her ideal lover and hero, has given over Wildeve, and fallen in real love with his successor. They marry : Mrs. Yeobright and her son having bitter reproach, one against the other. She in no way sanctions the marriage : and early attempts at reconciliation are frustrated by misunderstandings. Clym, finding his eyesight fail him takes to furz-cutting like a labourer for his living : he occupies a small cottage with Eustacia who learns to repent her marriage which has brought no realization of her vague hopes for some splendid or rapid scene of life and to renew her old capricious relation with Wildeve who promises her to bring her in Paris. Venn Thomasin's unselfish lover moves about the district, alert to discover anything, that nearly concerns her : thorough his agency much of the drama is developed. Mrs. Yeobright at last relents in love for her only son and sets out to visit him and his wife, upon a day of intense heat. Clym tired with labour is asleep in his room ; his wife Eustacia, and his cousin's husband Wildeve, are discussing affairs, while he sleeps. Eustacia see Mrs. Yeobright at the door ; their's eyes meet but Eustacia does not open the door, startled and afraid: the mother knocks again: it seemes to rouse Clym: thinking that Clym will open the door, Eustacia dismisses Wildeve by another way, coming back she still finds Clym sleeping, and his mother gone : she does not tell Clym : Mrs. Yeobright, worn out with suffering and physical weakness is found by Clym, after his going out, at the point of death upon her way home. He accuses himself for killing his mother and falls into a fever: upon recovery, he learns from casual talk with the folk of the place and from an explanation of certain words, spoken by his mother to a small boy upon the heath, as she lays down to die that Eustacia had seen her, had not opened the door to her, and had been with a man at that time. Exaggerating in ignorance, her culpability, he upbraids her violently and wildly she leaves him and returns to her father's house. The story ends in tragical misadventure, with the death of Eustacia and of Wildeve, one wild night, when he meant to drive her to Budmouth, whence she would go alone to France. Thomasin marries her loyal lover, Venn Clym betakes himself, full of sorrowful experience, to his mission of simple teaching among the country folk.

"After reading *The Return of the Native*, with perfect relish of its details (Hardy's novels are rich in good details, duly subordinate to his designs) still the simple truth of those bare facts, a girl's passionate caprice, a mother's hungry and jealous love, a son's agony for contrition, remains in the mind and in the memory, as the one thing borne up in them, by gradual evolution of the story. Now this singleness and simplicity of effect are secured only by an exquisite skill. To know, when an ornament, by its nature and place, will minister to the attainment of a general unity and simplicity in design, is the prerogative attribute of genius: the merely clever workman, conscious that he is weak in harmonious order and organization, relies for his degree of success upon his happy turn for disconnected and unessential ornaments".

2. Critical Comments on the plot: Giving a critical estimate of *The Return of the Native*, Duffin has observed in his book *Thomas Hardy* : "*In the Return of the Native* we are on true Wessex ground: and this in a special sense. It is a book of Egdon Heath ; without Egdon it would not hold together. With most of the other novels the scene could be transported to some other part of Wessex without vitally affecting the story : this story could not run its course anywhere other than amid the solitudes of Egdon. Egdon influences all the human characters, moving them to love or to hate, to despair or to the philosophic mind. Even pretty Tamsie, to whom it is just 'a ridiculous old place', confesses she could live nowhere else. And as if he had put so much life into Egdon that he had less to expend on the human figures, Hardy has given us here a set of characters not quite so high in the scale of being as those of *Far From the Madding Crowd*.

'When Egdon has been set before us with all Hardy's unmatched powers of description, humanity is introduced in such a way as to leave the spell unbroken : the fantastic reddleman and his unexpected preoccupation ; the anomalous old naval officer ; mysterious figures on the barrow ; the woman momentarily queen of the solitude then vanishing into Egdon's shade. Nevertheless, the opening of this novel is not so miraculous as that of *Far From the Madding Crowd* : it is conscious, deliberate, not a 'growth of the soil.' So the marvellous description of Eustacia that comes presently is the

product of an artless exquisite than that by which Bathsheba was shown in one bright flash. Eustacia herself is an otherwise unexampled type in Hardy : a woman who lives to love, and to love in a hot, blind, lustful way—not necessarily an animal way, but a way that leads to 'anything in trousers', even to Wildene. For Wildene is really pitiful, and Eustacia's intrigues with him are painfully squalid. Troy, at least, had some glamour of tinsel and swordsmanship about him, but this man keeps a public-house called. 'The Quiet Woman', Troy was (however inexplicably) fascinating. Wildeve makes even Eustacia yawn. He provokes the similie of 'a dancing master', but is more like a tailor's dummy, in his 'elegant new summer suit and light hat'. In a sense she uses him only as an instrument, but she is throughout attracted, and the fact robs her of some interest.

"Eustacia is a strange enough personality to demand something of the bizarre in her story, and this element is provided by Diggory, Venn, the Reddleman, a blood-red figure, isolated and aloof. He has his own hand to play, for the winning of Tamsie, but intervenes at a number of critical points in the larger action. Like Oak he is still and deep; like him he is passive and unselfish, though more purposefully, less patiently so.

"The second stage of the story begins with the return of Clym Yeobright from Paris. He has been a diamond merchant's manager, and towards the end of the book he evolves an educational ideal which in practice means the opening of 'a good private school for the sons of farmers' : two facts which perhaps do not necessarily rule him out from the class of heroic fiction. To Eustacia the first occupation smells of heaven, though she is not attracted by the other more than she need be. In class, Clym is a little away from the Wessex norm, his mother having been a curate's daughter, and Eustacia begins at once to think and dream about him—goes to look at his house before he arrives, and reads into his passing good-night 'all emotional things possible'. Perhaps seclusion on Egdon produces an artificial stimulation of the feelings as great as that caused by incarceration in office, school or nunnery, except to those who, like Clym, find the hills 'friendly and congenial'. Clym is a true 'native', desiring to combine the

intellectual life with the plainest of bucolic living. He is one of Hardy's pure intellectuals, and less suitable as a mate for the Eustacia we know than Knight for Elfride or Clare for Tess—for Eustacia's dissimilarity amounts to positive and violent antagonism. As their contacts progress—first at the mumming, then by the well, and swiftly to the first love scene, all handled by Hardy with beautiful care and restraint—the impossibility of their ever living and working side by side grows more and more evident. It is not only that their outlooks differ—that might have been modified by education : but she is essence of woman, he of man ; and to link these two essences in a bond can succeed only if no differences arise —if differences do arise they are irreconcilable.

"By this Clym's mother has come into the story and we have before us Hardy's own study of that mother-son relation which has since been luridly illuminated by the psychoanalysts and by the life and writings of D.H. Lawrence. Hardy is not much concerned with parents. Only in the cases of Clym Yeobright's mother and Grace Melbury's father is parental influence perceptibly exercised—in both cases with disastrous results. There are parents appertaining to Elfride, Stephan Smith, Ethelberta, and Anne Garland, but they are of a sensible easy-going, accommodating kind, and attempt no decisive part in directing or obstructing the lives of their children. Elizabeth Jane has two dubious fathers, one of them that rumbustious character the Mayor of Casterbridge, but even he lets Elizabeth Jane go her own gait—indeed, the dependence is rather the other way, Mrs. Durbeyfield's effect upon the life of Tess is bad enough, but only reason of its negative quality. In all these cases that actual relation between parent and child is matter-of-fact, unemotional. When Hardy wishes his characters to be completely free to dree their own weird, he carefully deprives them of immediate ancestry. Bathsheba has an aunt who lasts only for a few chapters ; Swithin St. Cleeve is an orphan ; Jude and Sue have nothing but distant relatives (their fate is just as tragic as that of Tess and Clare, who are fully equipped with parents) ; and Eustacia has an eccentric but other negligible grandfather.

"The relation between Clym and his mother is stated to be a relation of love. Indeed, in one passage Hardy suggests

that the love between them is of an exceptionally exalted kind, 'indestructible', 'profound'. It is singularly unhappy in its conduct and its consequences for a love capable of this description. Mrs. Yeobright's opposition to her son's desire to give up the jewellery trade and take up work of real service to his fellows is partly due to her obvious inability to follow the reasons which Clym lucidly sets forth to her, and partly to her unwillingness to see him risk his livelihood. This second motive is doubtless akin to love, but a little sympathy with his vision would have brought it a good deal closer still. Not that there is anything wrong with the picture, every line is ruthless in its veracity.

> 'In that case I'll branch off here, mother. I am going to Mistover.' Mrs. Yeobright turned to him enquiringly.
>
> 'I am going to help get the bucket out of the Captain's well', he continued. 'As it is so very deep I may be useful. And I should like to see this Miss Vye—not so much for her good looks as for another reason.'
>
> 'Must you go?' his mother asked.
>
> 'I thought to.'
>
> And they parted. 'There is no help for it,' murmured Clym's mother gloomily as he withdrew. 'They are sure to see each other. I wish Sam would carry his news to other houses than mine.'
>
> Clym's retreating figure got smaller as it rose and fell over the hillocks on his way. 'He is trender-hearted,' said Mrs. Yeobright to herself while she watched him; 'otherwise it would matter little. How he's going on!'
>
> He was indeed, walking with a will over the furze, as straight as a line, as if his life depended upon it. His mother drew a long breath, and turned to go back the way she had come.

The dialogue, the mode of conduct, are different from anything else in the novels, because the relation is unique. He was,' says Hardy, 'a part of her.' That is the weakness, as it is the strength, of the parental attitude.

"A second opportunity for loving sympathy, turned instead into a cause for acrimonious hostility, arises when Clym's feeling for Eustacia begins to develop. Parental opposition to a son's choice of a wife is age-old, and is not

excused by the fact that quite often the parents are, as Mrs. Yeobright is here, right. It is simply the woodenness of the man with a set purpose that makes Clym think that Eustacia 'would make a good matron in a boarding-school,' and we have seen that their dissimilarity of type was so fundamental as to render a successful marriage unlikely. Nevertheless, apart from the fact that Clym was an adult individual (not merely 'a part of her'), his mother's opposition did nothing but make things worse: in its absence there was a possibility that Clym and Eustacia might have learnt enough from each other to have achieved some happiness ; as it was, it was inevitable that Clym's divided loyalty should embitter the misunderstanding over Wildeve to a point where fate could thrust in and turn all to tragedy. But these are the materials out of which life makes tragedy.

"After Clym's admission that he is engaged to Eustacia his mother's opposition reaches such an intensity that it becomes necessary for him to leave home. He goes, and she lets him go. The trouble with these two is that they are too strong. One touch of emotional weakness (call it softness, call it kindness) on either side would have brought the whole black structure of misery tumbling down. Mrs. Yeobright's weakness comes only afterwards, in talking to Thomasin, and then in a pathetically blind way: 'Oh Thomasin, he was so good as a little boy—so tender and kind......I do not think one whom I called mine would grow up to treat me like this......This is maternity—to give one's best years and best love to ensure the fate of being despised.' Things are not improved by the bitter 'Rencounter by the Pool' of Clym's mother and Eustacia—an indictment of the incredible unreasonableness women can exhibit when occasion offers.

"The genuine yielding—weakness that rises from strength—comes later on both sides, after Clym has married and turned furz-cutter owing to his failing sight. Clym tells Eustacia he must seek reconciliation with his mother, and about the same time Mrs. Yeobright is telling the reddleman she too has determined to make some effort to heal the sorry breach. It is an indication of the central position assigned to the mother-motive that the chapters describing Mrs. Yeobright's journey

across the heath to Clym's cottage and back again stand as a climax to the novel. The later and perhaps more exact climax, the scene where Clym charges Eustacia with infidelity and his mother's death, is a consequence of the other one. The heath journey is marvellously done, and is punctuated, as it were, with the living creatures which Mrs. Yeobright, a noticing woman and a lover of animals, observes by the way: those maggoty things wriggling in the muddy pond, the sleeping cat, the drunken wasps on the fallen fruit, the ant's nest, the heron flying into the sun. And there was another she did not see until it was too late—the adder that bit her in the foot. But before this the well-intended visit has been tragically frustrated, and the stricken woman's creep back across Egdon is shown to us (and later to Clym) through the eyes of one of Hardy's rare but marvellous children, Johnny Nonsuch. It is by an extraordinary process of investigation and questioning, of Christian Cantle, Diggory Venn and finally little Johnny, that Clym tracks down the truth of what happened on that grievous after noon. And yet not quite the whole truth: the missing witness is Eustacia herself. Here he does not question, except in such a way as to make reply impossible or valueless. His love for his mother has taken complete possession of him now: had it been balanced by an equal love for his wife (but that, in the nature of the the case, was impossible) he would have been saved much raving despair. In the end he loses wife as well as mother, and he feels he has caused the death of both. The self-accusation is not altogether just: yet Clym's egoism has been dangerously ruthless. His point of view has been 'right' in both cases, but to follow right in scorn of consequence is stupid, and to override other less 'right' points of view is the mark of simple strength but not of that more complicated thing, greatness. The book closes with Clym thinking of his mother as a sublime saint, and preaching his first sermon on Rainbow on the text, 'Ask on, my mother; for I will not say thee nay'.

"It is a grim story, this first of Hardy's tragedies with a single, relentless drive to disaster. A striking difference between Shakespeare and Hardy is that in every one of his tragedies Shakespeare kills both hero and heroine. This

may be due to his sense of artistic finish, or to his tenderness for the children of his hand. Hardy, more cruel, leaves, as life generally does, one alive but maimed. Yeobright is among those few who are left not only sadder but wiser for their experience and their loss."

———

CHAPTER XXII

2. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. *The Return of the Native is a Confutation of free will. Man is represented as the helpless plaything of invisible powers, ruthless and indifferent . . . . (Baker) Comment.*

Or

Give a critical account of The Return of the Native as a tragedy.

Ans. Hardy casts his eye over all this panorama of the world, and finds it to be a scene of much fretting, vexation, bustle and confusion, much froth and fury, but signifying nothing. Death and Disease, Discord and Strife, Ruin and Devastation stalk everywhere. Laws of Nature and rule of society are in conflict ; the heart of man is the arena where great forces ranged on opposite sides wage a great war ; the beast and the God in him are ever in conflict. Men mostly mean well and do ill. The good that they would do they do not, and the evil that they do not they do. Something more powerful than they thwarts their plans, and they come to nought. All have to suffer :

> To each his suffering : all are men,
> Condemned alike to groan ;
> The tender for another's pain,
> The unfeeling for his own.

The environment is too strong for men, who are but pigmies being fighting with the giants of circumstances. There are desires and aspirations planted in the hearts of men, but the fulfilment is denied. Far instance take up *The Return of the Native;* it is the history of two or three people who are conscious of the dilemma in which Nature has put them,

trying fitfully to play their own parts in the life to which they have been condemned; and a sorry drama it is. Every exertion of individual will ends in futility. The pictorial opening of the novel is famous. It introduces the chief character; for in Hardy's stories, Nature, the Earth, Existence, is always a personage, and that chief personage is embodied this time in Egdon Heath, the dark, immemorial environment whose influence controls obscurely the lives and destinies of those who dwell contentedly amid its grey wildernesses or feel themselves cruelly out of their elment there. Egdon Heath symbolizes the whole cosmic order, in which man is an insignificant particle. And it seems to be alive, to be impassively aware of what these men and these women are doing and suffering.

> The place became full of watchful intentness now; for when other things sank brooding to sleep the heath appeared to awake and listen. Every night its Titanic form seemed to await something; but it waited thus, unmoved, during so many centuries, through the crises of so many things, that it could only be imagined to await one last crisis—the final overthrow.

"Having depicted this eternal brooding presence with the brush of a seer, Hardy introduces his human characters, in the same pictorial way; they are visualised as objects in the landscape till they make themselves known as animate beings. So Hardy's pen works: to tell what happens and how, he depicts the look and gesture of the doer. And his scenery is not scenery in the ordinary sense, not decoration in purple patches, not mere background, but an integral part of the drama. All is made visible, the landscape and the life going upon it. And there is no shock in the passage from description to narrative. His pictures of external nature expound the same philosophy, and are a piece with the story; they have precisely the same meaning. The first character to appears is, not the Native, but another of those who are out of gear with the existing order. 'Eustacia Vye was the raw material of a divinity.' 'She had the passions and instincts which make a model goddess, that is, those which make not quite a model woman.' Shallow, sensuous, high-strung, a typical 'decadent', she is keenly aware, so far as she herself is concerned, that she is a victim of the perverse dispensation of things. Circumstances have put her in the wrong place; juxtaposition with

the heath is the bane of her existence, and by that token everything is wrong. 'How I have tried and tried to be a splendid woman, and how destiny has been against me! I do not deserve my lot!' she cries, in a frenzy of bitter revolt. 'O the cruelty of putting me into this ill-conceived world! I was capable of much; but I have been injured and blasted and crushed by things beyond my control!' 'O how hard it is of Heaven to devise such tortures for me, who have done no harm to Heaven at all!' The heath calls up images of all that contrasts with it—'sunny afternoons on an esplanade, with military bands, officers and gallants around, stood like gilded letters upon the dark tablet of surrounding Egdon'.

"An environment which would have made a contented woman a poet, a suffering woman a devotee, a pious woman a psalmist, even a giddy woman thoughtful, made a rebellious woman saturnine.

"She is a Shelleyan creation, in her quarrel with the stern realities and her joy in 'what seems'; she yearns for a palace of delight, she would quaff all the moment can give, lest the cup should be snatched from her lips. 'Pleasure not known beforehand is half-wasted; to anticipate it is to double it'; and again, 'You are sad—never mind what it is—let us only look at what seems'. The morbid Eustacia when she comes on the scene is entangled in a clandestine affair with the local inkeeper Wildeve, a chip of the same sensual block as Troy. Like that other scamp, Wildeve takes advantage of a slip of inadvertency to evade marriage with the simple Thomasin towards whom he feels indifferent. From an intrigue that is growing wearisome Eustacia is suddenly roused by the news that Clym Yeobright is coming back to his native place. He is from Paris, and in her eyes is at once decked with all the glamour of that famed metropolis of pleasure. But, though Clym also turns out to be one of disillusioned, his pessimism is of a very different origin from Eustacia's. It is the hollowness of modern life seen in its most glittering aspects in Paris that revolted him, and sent him back home with some vague idea of cleansing himself by renewed contact with nature, and of evolving some plan of activity worth a man's energies. Clym has in him the making of an Edward Carpenter, but is

as ineffectual as a Richard Jefferies. If he cannot write, he will preach ; and his scheme at present is to open a country school, and teach something akin to Rousseau's gospel of nature and simplicity as the antidote to artificial diseases. 'All things considered, I can be a trifle less useless here than anywhere else'. For his is less a social philosophy than a counsel of despair. It does not appeal to Eustacia.

> Take all the varying hates felt by Eustacia Vye towards the heath, and translate them into loves, and you have the heart of Clym. He gazed upon the wide prospect as he walked, and was glad.

"Egdon Heath is in his blood ; but his nostalgia is as morbid as Eustacia's melancholia, and it cannot turn the sentimental idealist into a man. Though he fancies himself strong and determined, he suffers from paralysis of the will.

"They are strangers to each other as yet. Eustacia makes Clym's acquaintance by one of those fantastic devices for which Hardy had a weakness. She dresses herself up as a man, and goes with a party of mummers to Yeobright's house to reconnoitre the newcomer. They fall in love ; and, although Clym's plan is the last thing in the world Eustacia would ever approve, she feels sure that once married, she will easily induce him to abandon such quixotic scheme and take him to Paris. Obviously, any such marriage is foredoomed. The pair are out of sympathy with each other; and unless one or the other gives way, they will drift further and further apart. This is indeed what happens.

"But the growing rift between the wife and husband is not enough for Hardy; he accelerates the pace of events, and embitters the inevitable disaster with a series of accidents most of which would have had the odds against them in average life. That Clym's eyesight should fail, forcing him to give up his educational project, and leaving him with no resource but to earn his living as a labouring man, may be no violation of probability. But the confluence of untoward incidents that usher in the catastrophe is as glaringly the result of deliberate intention as are the cruder coincidences. From one point of view it is fate showing the cloven hoof, from the other it is the author giving events an illicit push.

Clym has broken with the mother whom he adores, for she sees through Eustacia and suspects her of still being on improper terms with Wildeve.

"But the poor old lady would be glad to break down the estrangement. She sends her son and her daughter Thomasin, now married to Wildeve fifty pounds apiece, their shares of a legacy. Wildeve encounters the messenger, and wins the money from him at dicing. Sequel, the picturesque scene in which Thomasin's humble adorer, Diggory Venn, the reddleman, suddenly appears and challenges Wildeve to another bout, in which chance or destiny lets him win back the whole sum, after they are reduced to casting the dice by the light of the glow-worms. Even this discomfiture of Wildeve, however, makes matters worse, for Diggory sends all the hundred pounds to Thomasin.

> The time seems near, if it has not actually arrived, when the chastened sublimity of a moor, a sea, or a mountain will be all of nature that is absolutely in keeping with the moods of the more thinking among mankind.

"This unfortunate occurrence is followed by the still more unfortunate chance that Wildeve calls on Eustacia and her husband the very afternoon when old Mrs. Yeobright has determined to come and make up understanding with the young couple. He found Clym asleep, and was practically alone with his old flame. Mrs. Yeobright knocks, she has seen a woman's face at the window, and she knows that Clym is at home. Eustacia leaves it to her husband to open the door, whilst she is getting rid of Wildeve. Mrs. Yeobright waits, and there is no response. She believes her son and his wife have shut her out. Wounded to the soul and worn out with her long walk, she sits down on the heath, and drowsing on a bed of shepherd's thyme is stung by an adder. Clym finds her dying, and learns the truth, and rather more than truth, from a little boy who has walked with her part of the way, and tells his mother: 'That woman asleep there walked along with me to-day, and she said I was to say that I had seen her, and she was a broken-hearted woman and cast off by her son.' There is a terrible scene between Clym and his wife, ending in a rupture. Eustacia returns to her old home with her grandfather. Wildeve meanwhile has received a

handsome legacy. He entreats her to fly with him; and she still half hoping her husband will come back to her, gives a conditional assent. Clym has indeed written a letter admitting that he was too severe and asking her to return. But, alas! another chapter of petty accidents intervenes; the letter never reaches her. Eustacia gives the agreed signal, and in a night of drenching rain sets out to join Wildeve. She falls in the dark into the weir-pool. Wildeve hearing the splash plunges to save her, and both are carried under.

"This summary of a well-known story was required to bring out the peculiar nature of Hardy's method in a work so representative of his peculiar genius. Put thus baldly, it all seems a tissue of contrivances for checkmating any possibility of a happy issue for these two beings, symbols of humanity in the hands of some power against which it is vain to contend. This is not a tale of love winning its way in spite of obstacles, or of seduction and its consequences, or of exciting hazards and escapes; it is one of those stories which the reader follows with eager suspense wondering what will happen next. Hardy's conclusions, as already noted, are implied in the preliminary situation. He states the problem, but the resultant is inevitable; whatever may be the fortuitous course taken by events they will come to the same thing in the end. Clym and Eustacia's union was foredoomed to woe; if one thing had not gone wrong another would. Each of his great novels is Thomas Hardy's picture of the general human situation. This is summed up here in the inflexible opposition of inner or of outer circumstances to the desires of two people who would fain be free agents, but can only struggle blindly and convulsively in the net of destiny in which they are caught. Whether the hostile influences are external to man, and even to be termed supernatural, is for the philosophic order to interpret, who may pronounce them to be simply the composite result of man's weaknesses and accumulated blunders and the recalcitrance of brute matter. Whatever it be, Hardy shows this arbiter in final control. Fate, or providence, or circumstance has put Eustacia, his tragic heroine, in the wrong place; Clym fails to deliver her. Nothing they can do will liberate them or provide a happy and worthy existence. Hence their history con-

sists of painful stresses rather than of actions, tensions between them and their environment, tensions between each other. The scenery is obviously symbolical of the predicament in which humanity finds itself. But the incidents, also, especially those which seem like interferences of an overriding fate, are equally symbolical, and necersary to Hardy's statement of the case. Though there is much talk about the general predicament of mankind, there is otherwise little evidence to substantiate it. The reader may assent wholeheartedly to the sentiment that times are not fair, and that Egdon Heath is a far more appropriate setting for the human drama to-day than any vale of Temple could be.

"The time seems near, if it has not actually arrived, when the chastened sublimity of a moor, a sea, or a mountain will be all of nature that is absolutely in keeping with the moods of the more thinking among mankind.

"The reader may indeed feel sure that a marriage such as Clym and Eustacia's, nay, such ignorances of the realities and such flimsy aspirations as Eustacia's, spell disaster. But the graphic symbolism by which the unseen powers, whatever they be, are shown fitfully interfering, or engaged in a steady and inexorable process of causation, is as necessary to Hardy's picture as was Flaubert's relentless anlysis of mind and motive applied to Madam Bovary, a parallel but essentially different case from Eustacia Vye's. Hardy's epilogue to the tragedy is the paragraph on Clym's 'wrinkled mind' in the afternoon.

> He did sometimes think he had been ill-used by fortune, so far as to say that to be born is a palpable dilemma, and that instead of men aiming to advance in life with glory they should calculate how to retreat out of it without shame. But that he and his mother had been sarcastically and pitilessly handled in having irons thrust into their souls he did not maintain long. It is usually so, except with the sternest of men. Human beings, in their generous endeavour to construct a hypothesis that shall not degrade a First Cause, have always hesitated to conceive a dominant power of lower morality than our own; and, even while they sit down and weep by the waters of Babylon, invent excuses for the oppression which prompts their tears.

(See also Answer to Question No. 6.)

Q. 2. *What is the importance of the Egdon Heath in the Return of the Native?*

Or

Nature herself is one of the characters in Hardy's best novel. Discuss with reference to the Return of the Native.

Ans. Nature, Earth, Existence is the chief character here introduced in the famous opening scene of the novel. It is Egdon Heath, a person with a character; it embodies and symbolizes the whole cosmic order in which man is an insignificant particle. It is alive, having an active influence over the chief characters, shaping and moulding their destinies. So the Heath is not merely a scene, a background, but pervasive force holding the action of the novel and its characters. It represents the established system, the social conventions, and the unusualness of the strong characters reduced to nil against this Immanent Will. It supports only those who remain steady and genuine to it : those who rebel against it are perished. Let a man 'Will' for himself, and he is destroyed. He must 'will' according to the established order. Man is transitory and insignificant as compared with the brooding permanence of the vast heath. This obsecure and obsolete country is the World of Nature under the aspect of time, time geological and historical alike. Man has scarcely scratched its surface. It has its own life which is man's only when he is content to be one with the furz-cutters. Those who like Eustacia and Wildeve, are cut off from this state of natural simplicity, they suffer.

The tragic sipirit embeded in the symbolic Egdon Heath reveals itself in the principal characters like Eustacia, Wildeve Clym, etc. It is potentially present in the veins of these characters. The minor characters lack self-awareness ; they are the place themselves; hence happy and secure on it. It also represents uncorrupt humanity having no effect of the modern age of machine. Hardy seems to mean that man has alienated himself from his original purpose and has ceased to be a natural being in his craze for the civilized man ; he becomes devoid of the natural real life of passions of instincts, crude organic life, so that his artificiality leads him to disastrous end. The Heath, as the mother earth, gives forth a human

existence and it has a fixed, original, natural purpose behind its programme. Those of its elements like Eustacia, Wildeve and others who interpret this purpose in a different and selfish way, and become discordant with the established order, are destroyed; it ceases to support and protect them. So it is indifferent if some are drowned or bit by snakes and other married and preaching uselessly. Thus we see that Heath stands for :

(*a*) The tragic principle ; (*b*) to represent the life of instincts ; (*c*) it represents destiny, blind indifferent and eternal. In this respect it also presents the principle of futility of humanity ; (*d*) symbolic expression of Hardy's mind.

The Return of the Native is the book of Egdon Heath. Without Heath it would not hold together. Other novels express some parts but it is full expression of the Heath. Its story cannot run otherwise. It influences all characters and moves them to love or hate. In fact, in *The Return of the Native* Hardy has given more life to Heath and less to human figures.

When the Heath has been set before us with unmatched power of description, humanity is introduced in such a way as to leave the spell unbroken ; the fantastic reddleman with his unexplained pre-occupations ; the strange navel officers ; the woman 'queen of solitude' and then vanishing into Egdon Heath. Nevertheless *Far From the Madding Crowd* is superior in its opening.

The second stage of the novel is the return of Clym to his native place from Paris in order to teach the sons of 'Heath'. Eustacia is also introduced as a beloved and lover of Clym and the conflict starts after their marriage. To Clym Heath is 'friendly and congenial' and he becomes true 'native'. He is more intellectual and less suitable for Eustacia. Conflict between the two is not reconciled. However Clym marries Eustacia against the wishes of his mother who did not want that her son should return from Paris in the interest of his livelihood. Clym leaves house and turns into a furz-cutter for he becomes blind. Climax of the story comes when Mrs. Yeobright comes to her son for reconciliation but returns back

disappointedly and in the way is bitten by a snake and she dies: and the result is the dramatic scene between Clym and Eustacia about his mother's death. It is by an extraordinary process of investigation through Christian Cantle, Diggory Venn and finally through little Tommy that Clym comes to know about his mother. Here love of his mother takes him over.

Clym, the hero of the novel is in harmony with the Heath and its shaggy hills have soothening effect on him. In his happy days, Egdon gives him an equality with anything under the sun and in his misfortune it turns him into a furz-cutter. He behaves like an undistinguishable part of the Heath. Eustacia seems to be an unfit to reign to this abode of darkness. Heath turns into a bitter enemy for her and withholds her from her passionate ideal. Clym does not bring her to Paris for the realization of her romantic dreams and her all efforts are thwarted and she dies by jumping into a pond in the darkness. Wildeve also dies with her. If Clym is child of Egdon, the reddleman is its spirit and with him it is hand in glove. Reddleman was contented with the life of the Heath. He uses it in his war with Wildeve. For Thomasin alone Egdon has no 'ghost'. To her it is impersonal ground ; her fears of it are rational. Another effect of Egdon is like that of the tempest in Lear which aided the ruin wrought by the ingratitude of Kings' daughter. Egdon here first wearies out the heart-torn wandering woman and then kills her with a verminous creature from its own bosom. Clym is its chosen son. The story ends fittingly with a picture of his delivering a first of the series of moral sermon on the mount—the culminating point of Egdon.

There is much irony of events and the tragedy arises out of incongruity of situations. Two things of diverse natures are brought together, and they are constantly in conflict with each other—Clym and his mother, Clym and Eustacia, Eustacia and Egdon, Wildeve and Eustacia, Mrs. Yeobright and her son. Here is Egdon, the realm of night and Eustacia 'queen of night' born to reign on Egdon. And yet she hates Egdon, hates nature, and her fiery soul longs for hallow beauty and vanaties of Paris. She cannot go to Paris but to Wildeve—bemoaning her fate, yet going. She vehemently declares that she has tried to be a

"splendid woman" and protests against the cruelty of situation in the ill conceived world ; she repents for her marriage with Clym: she demands life, poetry, passions and sees them not here but in Paris. But since she is in disharmony with the Heath she is struck down to death. She has a duel incongruity which forms her tragedy. On the one hand she is in conflict with Clym and on the other with Egdon. Any one who is in love with this place, for him, cold sea, pure stars and the windy sky would be heaven upon earth. But to Eustacia, who is in disharmony with this place, for her smouldering desires, it is hell of mere voidness, opression and restraint. Only this side of her gives rise to antagonism between her and Clym, otherwise they are splendid mates. Clym has less love and more passions for the realization of his desire of running a school to serve the community. He wants the help of Eustacia in running the school and she wants him to bring her to Paris. He wants to serve the community. Thus their union is frought with the tragedy of divergent aims. Some major incongruities spring out for the following reasons :

(1) Clym's mother's trust in him ;

(2) His plan of becoming a teacher ;

(3) Eustacia's happiness.

Fate vetoes the second and the other two break down from the difficulties inherent in the nature of the subjects.

For these reasons Eustacia runs away with Wildeve :

(1) Hatred for Egdon ;

(2) Failing of Paris scheme ;

(3) Rage at husband's lowly occupation ; and

(4) Quarrel due to the death of Clym's mother. Wildeve is a mere foil. 3rd incongruity of events becomes prominant in the latter half of the book (episode of Mrs. Yeobrights death).

After the death of Mrs. Yeobright, Clym writes to Eustacia for her return to him and waits her. Here again his love conquers his reasons. Clym sitting home all alone is waiting

for Eustacia. Again as Clym says Heath is between the 'furies of wind and rain'. He bears a sound of woman's footstep and says 'surely it is Eustacia. He opens the door and finds Thomasin standing before the door. She tells him about her flight with Wildeve—the flight and that ends in drowning.

Q. 3. *The Return of the Native is the most Representative Novel of the Hardy. Comment.*

Ans. Of all the novels of Hardy *The Return of the Native* is the most representative.' Referring to this Allen has observed in *The English Novel*: "If any single novel may be taken as the key to Hardy's mind and art it is probably *The Return of the Native*, his sixth book, published in 1878. A tragic love story, like almost all his fiction, it is extremely simple in plot. Clym Yeobright, who has been a diamond merchant in Paris, comes home to serve his fellowmen as teacher and preacher. He falls in love with and marries Eustacia Vye, who has had a secret love-affair with Damon Wildeve, the husband of Clym's cousin, Thomasin. Eustacia and Wildeve resume their affair and after their death by drowning, Thomasin marries Diggory Venn, the travelling reddleman, who has throughout brooded over the action of the novel like a guardian but not always effectual angel. The significant characters are Clym and Eustacia. Clym is first of Hardy's idealists, the first of what have been called his 'prig heroes,' a man conscious all the time of what Hardy himself called 'the ache of modernism.' In a sense, he represents Hardy's own values:

> In Clym Yeobright's face could be dimly seen the typical countenance of the future. Should there be a classic period to art hereafter, its Pheidias may produce such faces. The view of life as a thing to be put up with, replacing that zest for existence which was so intense in early civilizations, must enter so throughly into the constitution of the advanced races that its facial expression will become accepted as a new artistic departure. People already feel that a man who lives without disturbing a curve of feature, or setting a mark of mental concern anywhere upon himself, is too far removed from modern perceptiveness to be a modern type. Physically beautiful men—the glory of the race when it was young—are almost an anachronism now; and we wonder whether, at some time or other, physically beautiful women may not be an anachronism likewise.

"Clym, then, is Hardy's modern man; Eustacia, however, is not his modern women; she is woman as he most characteristically sees her. She has her affinities with Flaubert's Emma Bovary. She is a born romantic, at odds wtih her environment:

> To be loved to madness—such was her great desire. Love was to her the one cordial which could drive away the eating loneliness of her days. And she seemed to long for the abstraction called passionate love more than for any particular lover.

But Hardy's depiction of her is very different from Flaubert's Emma. Emma is reveald with cruel exactitude, exposed with the clinical remorselessness of a case-history. Eustacia is magnified into a splendid romantic figure. E.M. Forster says in *Aspects of the Novel* that Hardy 'conceives his novels from an enormous height.' He conceives his great characters from the same height; in the case of Clym by making him a representative of what he considered modern man—and the man of the future - in his most essential qualities; in the case of Eustacia by a richly romantic view of her. There is no implied criticism of her attitudes, such as is felt throughout in Flaubert's rendering of Emma. She is too big for that, and all Hardy's powers of evocation are showered upon her:

> Eustacia Vye was the raw material of a divinity. On Olympus she would have done well with a little preparation. She had the passions and instincts which make a model goddess, that is, those which make not quite a model woman. Had it been possible for the earth and mankind to be entirely in her grasp for a while, had she handled the distaff, the spindle, and the shears at her own free will, few in the world would have noticed the change of government There would have been the same inequality of lot, the same heaping up of favours here, of contumely there, the same generosity before justice, the same perpetual dilemmas, the same captious alternation of caresses and blows that we endure now......
>
> She had Pagan eyes, full of noctural mysteries, and their light, as it came and went, and came again, was partially hampered by their oppressive lids and lashes; and of these the underlid was much fuller than it usually is with English women. This enabled her to indulge in reverie without closing them up. Assuming that the souls of men and women were visible essences, you could fancy the colour of Eustacia's soul to be flamelike. The sparks from it that rose into her dark pupils gave the same impression.......

> Her presence brought memories of such things as Bourbon roses, rubies, and tropical midnights; her moods recalled lotus-eaters and the march in *Athalie*; her motions, the ebb and flow of the sea; her voice, the viola...

"The passage reminds us that Pater had published *The Renaissance* five years before. The wonder is that so highly romantic and mannered a piece of writing could have been successfully woven into the texture of the novel. Yet it is, and one can think of no other English novelist who could have got away with it. One thing, however, is clear: the woman so described could not possibly be a fit wife for the single-minded idealist who 'had a conviction that the want of most man was knowledge of a sort which brings wisdom rather than affluence,' and who, wishing 'to raise the class at the expense of the inidividuals rather than the individuals at the expense of the class,' 'was ready at once to be the first unit sacrificed.' And indeed Eustacia marries Clym because she cannot *not* believe that he will return to Paris, taking her with him; when his eyesight fails as a result of his studies and he takes up furze-cutting rather than endure idleness, she again becomes Wildeve's mistress, as she was before her marriage.

"But, as *The Return of the Native* further shows, there is another way in which Hardy conceives his novels and their tragic characters from an enormous height. The anthologists of English prose have done him no service by snipping off from the book the description of Egdon Heath with which it opens and isolating it as a purple passage. The heath is not just so much scenic backcloth to the action, it is all-pervasive; without it, the novel would be unimaginable, for the heath provides it with the especial dimension in which it has its being. The heath holds the action of the novel and its characters as though in the hollow of the hand. It does not matter in the least that, living on Egdon, Eustacia dreams of Paris, that is part of her tragic destiny. The function of the Heath in the novel is to describe, as carefully and thoroughly as Hardy can, the real circumstances in which man lives. What the individual man may feel about those circumstances is irrelevant, for he does not thereby escape them. The Heath, one might say, is an extended image of the nature of which

man is part, in which he is caught, which conditions his very being, and which cares nothing for him. His life in relation to it is as ephemeral as the bonfires the peasants make of the heath furze.

"This ephemerality of man, the insignificance of his being, is brought out time and again in *The Return of the Native*, generally by reference to the brooding permanence of the vast heath. 'This obscure, obsolete, superseded country' is the world of nature under the aspect of time, time geological and historical alike. Man has scarcely scratched its surface. It has its own life, which is man's only when he is content to be lowly and unassuming like the furze-cutters who live off it. Hardy shows us the heath through all the seasons of the year and over immeasurably greater stretches of time. At times it 'seemed to belong to the ancient world of the carboniferous period, when the forms of plants were few, and of the fern kind; when there was neither bud nor blossom, nothing but a monotonous extent of leafage, amid which no bird sang.'

Such is the heath in what may be called its geological aspect. But it has another:

> The month of March arrived, and the heath showed its first faint signs of awakening from winter trance. The awakening was almost feline in its stealthiness. The pool outside the bank by Eustacia's dwelling, which seemed as dead and desolate as ever to an observer who moved and made noises in his observation, would gradually disclose a state of great animation when silently watched awhile. A timid animal world had come to life for the season. Little tadpoles and efts began to bubble up through the water, and to race along beneath it; toads made noises like very young ducks, and advanced to the margin in twos and threes; overhead, bumblebees flew hither and thither in the thickening light, their drone coming and going like the sound of a gong.

This secret life of the heath Hardy describes again and again, with all the powers of eye and ear for nature in which he is unrivalled among our novelists. The human inhabitants of the heath he sees almost from an anthropoligst's point of view, or the specialist's in comparative religion. When the peasants dance in August time, as it were, is telescoped; the centuries slip by; they behave as their ancient ancestors did.

'For the time Paganism was revived in their hearts, the pride of life was all in all, and they adored none other than themselves.' Christian Cantle, Granfer Cantle, Timothy Fairway, Sam the turf-cutter, and the rest are as much a part of nature, of the life of the heath, as the toads in March that make noises like very young ducks. Not so Clym, Eustacia, Thomasin, and Wildeve: these are cut off from nature, and that they are cut off means that they are undone, though in the case of Thomasin, Hardy altered his original conclusion of the novel to provide her with a happy ending.

"Hardy's veiw of life, then, was cosmic. This means that his tragic novels exist always on two planes, the plane of design and the plane of plot. As a plotter he was often defective. Sometimes—and then it seems the result of incompetence—he stumbles because the course of the action suddenly becomes implausible, as when Tess kills Alec D' Urberville with the bread-knife, an implausibility underlined by the failure in tact which allows him to describe the blood seeping through the floor to the ceiling below in the likeness of 'a gigantic ace of hearts.' His incursions into melodrama are similar signs of a failure in tact ; the final arrest of Tess at Stonehenge is an instance. It just fails to come off; the grandiose conception is somehow blurred.

"But Hardy's chief weakness in plot arises from his view of causality. He is intent to show that the stars in these courses fight against the aspiring, the man or woman who would rise above the common lot through greatness of spirit, of ambition, or passion. Here his problem was difficult indeed, and it is not surprising he never solved it. For the universe itself to become suddenly hostile to man could only be shown through the working of what may be called the freak coincidence. It is silly to blame Hardy for the emphasis he places on coincidence ; simply, he believed in coincidence. To take an example from *The Return of the Native*: it is part of the conspiracy of things against the exceptional man that Clym's mother should visit Eustacia, in order to make the peace between them, at the very time that Eustacia is entertaining Wildeve; it is part of nature's enmity that she should be bitten by the snake on her way home. But Hardy, as though not wholly convinced himself, does not know

where to stop. He spoils his case by overstatement: when we learn later that Eustacia's letter to Clym has not been delivered because the messenger forgot to post it, we begin to protest. We begin to feel that the author has aligned himself with the nature of things against his characters, that he is manipulating fate against them." (Also see the last part of the character-sketch of Clym).

Q. 4. *It is said that : "In Return of the Native, Hardy attempted to observe the three classical unities of time, place and action, as recommended by Aristotle. This was in keeping with his love of fitness and proportion as an architect." Comment.*

Ans. 1. *Unity of Time* : "The story begins on the fifth of November. All the major events occur in the interval of one year. These include the return of Clym for Christmas, the marriage of Wildeve and Thomasin, the marriage of Clym and Eustacia, the death of Mrs. Yeobright, in August, the birth of Thomasin's baby, and Eustacia's separation from her husband. The drowning takes place during the night of November the sixth, when Eustacia and Wildeve lose their lives at the weir.

"The *Aftercourses*, or Book Six, will bring the story up to the following Summer and Autumn. Then there follows the account of the Maypole celebration eighteen months after the death of Wildeve and Eustacia. The marriage of Venn and Thomasin takes place about three months after that.

2. *Unity of Place* : "*The Retu·n of the Native* is a novel of *atmosphere ;* all the action takes place on Egdon Heath, in Wessex. Wessex was originally the name of an old Fifth Century Saxon Kingdom ; Hardy revives it as the name of the south-western part of England, which is the setting of this and other of his novels. Hardy was himself born in the heart of this region, and is affected by the idyllic charm of nature here.

"So successfully has hardy re-created the atmosphere of the heath, that Arthur McDowell calls this novel "the fullest achievement of Hardy's prose, and in its evocation of the spirit of a place, unexcelled by any English prose." Again, R. A. Scott-James, in "Fifty Years of English Literature, (1900—1950)," asserts that "there are three elements which Hardy is

qualified to show in his best work : First, nature in her sweeter or wilder moods; second, humanity, breathing and passionate; third, destiny, presiding over all, and cruel in its blindness." All these elements are connected with the heath in *The Return of the Native.*

" 'To many persons, this Egdon was a place which had slipped out of its century generations ago, to intrude as an uncouth object, into this. It was an obsolete thing, and few cared to study it." ' The heath possesses a distinctive personality, appreciated only by a few, but exerting, nonetheless, an influence over the lives of all. Never a mere ornament, it has ever been called the chief character in the story. Through intense localization, it should be noted, Hardy makes us feel the power of the universal.

"Therefore, there are two respects in which the heath is important in the novel ; one is its beauty, lavishly painted for us by the author ; and the other is the way in which it influences the destinies of the charcters.

(A) Description of the Heath :

"As the story proceeds, and the seasons change, Hardy gives descriptions of it which are filled with poetic beauty and power. It has been said, that description is this novelist's greatest gift ; his genius is evident in his ability to suggest the infinite, the cosmic, space and time as extending out beyond the individual scene. We see the physical aspects of the heath in autumn, when the land is brown and desolate, in winter, when Thomasin picks the holly :

> The open hills were airy and clear, and the remote atmosphere appeared, as it often appears on a fine winter day, in distinct planes of illumination independently toned, the rays which lit the nearer tracts of landscape streaming visibly across those further off ; a stream of ensaffroned light was imposed on a stratum of deep blue, and behind these lay still remoter scenes wrapped in frigid grey.

"Again, we see the heath in summer dress, when it is alive with exotic butterflies, emerald grasshoppers, gaudy snakes, and sporting baby rabbits ; we see it in the heat of late August, when, branded by the mark of the sun, the purple wild-flowers

turn brown, obscene creatures wallow in the shallow ponds, and the blighted trees of Devil's Bellows moan in the silent air. Its music rings through the entire novel in sympathy with the moods of the protagonists. (See Book 1, Chapter 6).

(B) The Influence of the Heath on Human Destiny :

"Sometimes Hardy describes the heath as a great beast of prey awakening from sleep, or filled with a spirit of unrest. In a sense, it is the background for the human tragedy, and yet, paradoxically, it is always in the foreground, symbolizing something yet greater than human passions.

"The heath acts as a catalyst which keeps emotions in suspension ; it creates different feelings in different individuals, and causes either harmony or discord between the two groups. The tragedy, then, is developed from the attitude of the principals towards the heath. Captain Vye, Clym, Thomasin and Mrs. Yeobright love its worn face ; Eustacia and Wildeve dread its solitary power. The enduring force of nature resides in it, so that man must either submit or be beaten. Revolt against its spirit produces disaster ; it is pagan in its indifference to the sufferings of man. Though Hardy loves the beauty of the Heath, and is sensitive to the magic of its spell, he feels an overflowing pity for the men and women who are vicitims of its will.

"The first appearance of Eustacia Vye is symbolic of her desire to separate herself from it, when her human figure on Rainbarrow seems to pierce the sky. At the end of the novel, we are given a parallel picture of Clym, standing on the same spot, preaching to the heath-dwellers. Loving Egdon, he wants, in a way, to give it a moral sense, and raise the heath to heaven. Much of the action takes place outdoors, when the heath joins persons of different classes in the mummers' festival, the fairs, the bonfires and maypole dance.

"Beyond the heath we feel the influence of cosmic forces ; with its ancient barrows, it is a connection with a remote and pagan past. Through the particular, Hardy continually makes us aware of the universal ; the gunpowder plot celebrations have their origin in rites of Thor and Woden ; the sighing of the trees about the weary Mrs. Yeobright is hard to understand

on so still a day ! the wind in November speaks with a worn, dry whisper, like a living voice from the past; superstition flourishes in the occultism of Susan Nonsuch, and the ghostly terrors of the weak-minded Christian Cantle. References to Greek and pagan mythology abound. The love-idyll of Clym and Eustacia is a 'timeworn' drama and the powers of space are active in their destinies at the eclipse. At that time, the moon depicts a small image in herself in each of the young man's eyes, while he gazes on the far and silvery globe :

> His eye travelled over the length and breadth of that distance of country—over the Bay of Rainbows, the sombre Sea of Crises, the Ocean of Storms, the Lake of Dreams, the vast walled Plains, and the wondrous Ring Mountain—till he almost felt himself to be voyaging bodily through its wild scenes, standing on its hollow hills, traversing its deserts, descending its vales and old sea bottoms, or mounting to the edges of its craters.

"And as the band of shadow widens on the moon—the cloaked figure of Eustacia appears at the Barrow's base. Clym descends to meet his fate, in the drama of heath and heavens.

"Another example of the relationship between human destiny, the heath and the powers beyond, is the moment of storm where the chaos in Eustacia's mind is in perfect harmony with the chaos without, and the incantations of Susan Nonsuch mingle with 'firmamental darkness.' (The literary device used when the rain and tempest correspond with the despair of Eustacia, is called the 'pathetic fallacy.')

There follows a list of the places on Egdon Heath which are significant in the story :

Alderworth—Where Clym and Eustacia occupy a small house after their marriage.

Anglebury—A town where Thomasin and Wildeve go to be married.

Blooms-End—Where Mrs Yeobright's home is situated.

Budmouth—A watering place on the south coast, where Eustacia lived before coming to the heath.

Mistover—The district in which Capt. Vye lives.

Rainbarrow—An elevated Celtic burial pile near Mistover.

Shadwater Weir—The dam near which Eustacia and Wildeve meet death by drowning.

Stickleford—The place where Venn and Thomasin make their home.

3. *Unity of Action* : "The main plot is the story of Clym, who had opportunities for material advancement, and would not take them. His return to Egdon Heath wrecks the lives of others, since he will not accept the standard values of his friends, but insists on following his own ideas.

"There are two subplots; one is the courtship of Venn and Thomasin, and the other is the intrigue which is carried on by Wildeve and Eustacia.

"*The Return of the Native* has been called a "regional" novel, because the framework of the action, both in the physical and symbolical senses, is Egdon Heath. The action is really a study of the irony of fate. The theme is the desire for expansion of spirit ; for Clym, this is to be accomplished on Egdon Heath ; in Eustacia, there is a deep-rooted longing for the scope of Paris. Conflict ensues from these desires which are fundamentally opposed. The heath, in consequence, precipitates the tragedy."

Q. 5. *Write a short note on the element of coincidence in the plot of the Return of the Native.*

Ans. "Hardy believes in fate as a malign influence on the affairs of man; and man is the sole moral force in the universe. To illustrate the theory, Hardy makes use of coincidence in the development of his plots.

"In *The Return of the Native*, the first coincidence occurs when the marriage of Wildeve and of Thomasin does not take place, because the licence made out at Budmouth is invalid at Anglebury. Another illustration is Venn's chance meeting with the frightened boy who had maintained Eustacia's signal bonfire. In this way, he learns of her attachment for Wildeve. The return of Clym is another coincidence, at so critical a time in his cousin's life. He provides a distraction for Eustacia, who has been the chief obstacle to Thomasin's

marriage. The Return of the Native, therefore, changes five destinies.

"Later, Mrs. Yeobright hears of her son's intention to marry Eustacia on the very day that he meant to bring the two women together. She is so angry that Clym cannot reconcile her to the idea of the marriage. A meeting of his mother and the girl might have ironed out all the difficulties. By coincidence, Clym proposes, finally, to Eustacia during an eclipse of the moon—a bad omen.

"Another coincidence is Christian Cantle's loss of the Yeobright's guineas to Wildeve, whom he encounters by chance, and an even greater one is Venn's good fortune in winning the money back from Wildeve at dice. By coincidence, Venn does not discover that part of the money was intended for Clym, since the remarks he has heard lead him to believe that all the money is Thomasin's. Wildeve's inherited wealth leads to his death and Eustacia's, as it makes possible their escape from the heath.

"Several disastrous coincidences occur in connection with Mrs. Yeobright's and Clym's attempt to get in touch with each other after Clym's marriage. One is her taunt to Eustacia about receiving money from Wildeve, which sets the girl against her. At the very moment when the reddleman is urging Mrs. Yeobright at Blooms-End to visit her son, Clym is discussing the problem with his wife at Alderworth. Discouraged by her mother-in-law's apparent insult, Eustacia does not oppose a reconciliation, but does not encourage one either. Consequently, Mrs. Yeobright takes the initiative the next day.

"By coincidence, the weather is oppressively hot; by coincidence, Mrs. Yeobright catches sight of the furze-cutter who is her son, on her way to the house; and by coincidence, Wildeve chooses the same moment to call on Eustacia. Again by coincidence, at the climax of the novel, Clym stirs in his sleep so as to make Eustacia think he will awake to answer his mother's knock, and he does not gain full consciousness, so that she goes away. By another most fatal coincidence, Eustacia has been seen at the window by a small boy who later tells Clym of her part in the tragedy of his

mother's death. By the merest coincidence, Clym later finds his mother—whose moan he thought was that of a weary furze-cutter—in her exhausted condition on the heath. By coincidence, Eustacia and Wildeve are present, though concealed, at the moment of her death.

"Later in the story, when Eustacia has separated from Clym, Charley, with the best of intentions, lights the Fifth of November bonfire which Wildeve takes to be his former sweetheart's signal. On this occasion he makes the offer of flight which brings about their downfall. Again the ignorant Susan Nunsuch's image of Eustacia made in beeswax disintegrates over the flame as the life of that fair woman wanes on the heath.

"At the end, Clym arrives too late to be able to prevent the death of his wife; and at length fate operates in such a way as to save Yeobright's life, when the lights of Wildeve's gig bring Venn to the spot of the last disaster.

"By the use of coincidence in the plot, Hardy tries to make his readers feel that man is the sport of the immortals, and that his will is bound, to some extent, by forces outside himself. Though this theory is put forward with the greatest art, nevertheless we feel that Hardy may exaggerate the gloom of life, in order to illustrate his pessimistic philosophy.

Q. 6. *Write an essay an Hardy's Pessimism. Illustrate your answer from the Return of the Native.*

Ans. "*The Return of the Native* is less emphatically a records of disappointment, though not less powerfully a picture of disillusion and incongruity. It is not the study of a single mortal writhing on the toasting fork of the fate, but a wider puppet stage with the devil visibly at work on a great complication of strings. There is much irony of events but the grand tragedy of this tale arises out of this incongruity of situation. On all sides we have greatness bound in warring union with dissimilar greatness, virtue looking on truth and failing to recognise it, splendour attributed by tawdriness: we have Clym and Eustacia, Eustacia and Egdon, Mrs. Yeobright and her son, Wildeve and Eustacia. Here is Egdon, realm of night; and Eustacia queen of night, born to reign on Egdon like a jewel in an Etheop's ear. And yet she

hates Egdon, hates Nature, and her firey soul longs for the surface brilliance and shallow, hollow beauty and vanity of Paris, the paltry excitememts of *promenade* (public-walk) flirtations at a fashionable watering place; an elegant summer suit eclipses for her the qualities of manhood clad in rougher *rar*. Oh, the pity of it, the cruel pity of it. Might one not weep to see her go at last to Wildeve—bemoaning her fate, yet going; vehemently declaring she has tried to be 'a splendid woman' and exclaiming against cruelity of her situation in all ill-conceived world? Grevious error, verily Eustacia—married to Clym Yeobright, 'her perfect complement'—on Egdon: what more had the world to give? But she demands "life—music, poetry, passion, and sees them, not here but in Paris and Weymouth; The leaven of Eustacia's sensuous passions pervades the book and is the source of foundaticn of duel incongruity that forms the tragedy of Eustacia's life—her seclusion upon Egdon and her marriage to Clym Yeobright: The auster celibate nature of the great heath has been pointed out. It is place which, to one whose love was akin to the cold sea, the pure stars, the windy sky, would be heaven upon earth, a perfect home a constant inspiration. To Eustacia, seeking an outlet for her smouldering fires, it is a hell of mere voidness and solitude, oppression and restraint. Just so it is this side of her character that gives rise to the antagonism between her and Clym. In other respects they were splendid mates, and each is worthy to other. But with Yeobright, passion, as she knows it, is an incident, an interlude. He loves her, but his passion is highly 'chaste.' Passion to him is not in all: it is something that is to lift his being into a higher atmosphere where the rest of life is not forgotten but ennobled. Their conceptions of congugal life are anti-thetical. She imagines, first, a world-oblivious rapture, and second, though hardly less important—an introduction to the whirl of fashion's delights. He regards her rather as a splendid help-mate in the great world-work, he has set his heart upon, though when he tries to put his view of her into practical words, he speaks nothing but blatant pathos, and it is she who is right and reasonable when she declares 'there is not that in Eustacia Vye which will make good home-spun wife' But provided he can raise his fellow men by whatever humble means, with her beside him, he is content. She catches a

momentary glimpse of one side of this veritable love when she says, 'I would live with you in a hermitage here than not be yours at all, but it is a fleeting phase, half-meant, and Paris is heaven she dreams of. Her fury at his enforced occupation of furz-cutting is almost ludicurous in its small-mindedness. He himself perceives that her tastes touch his own only at infrequent points. For him he is intellectually constructed, and though he can rebel his mind is elastic enough to take in mishap as well as good fortune, while his outlook embraces with gladness the solitude of Egdon and the simplicity of its dwellers, but passes contemptuously over the banalities of Paris. Hence peers in grandeur of personality, Yeobright and Eustacia are not alike than marble and molten gold, and their attempt at union is necessarily frought with the tragedy of divergent aims.

"An incongruity no less deep as already been shown existing between Yeobright and his mother, and he soon recognises the difficulty of his situation. 'Three antaganistic growths had to be kept alive : his mother's trust in him : his plan for becoming a teacher : and Eustacias happiness'. Fate to some extent vetoes the second ; the other two break-down from the difficulties inherent in the natures of the subjects. There is also Wildeve and his absurd unworthiness of Eustacia condescension. As a matter of fact, once Yeobright has appeared on the scene, Wildeve plays a very small part in determining Eustacia's destiny. It is her hatred for Egdon, her disappointment at the fall of her Paris schemes, her rage at her husband's lowly occupation, and quarrel due to the death of Mrs. Yeobright, that drives her on to the fatal flight. Wildeve is used only as the some what despised intrument of escape. That he should have allured her at all, should have been allowed and pay court to her, is one of the most painfull unfitness of the story.

"Thus much of the characters, and the pity of their multiple misunderstandings. The irony of the events becomes prominant in the latter half of the book. It is just when Mrs. Yeobright has at last determined to take the great step that will put everything right, the demon of mischance begins his game, and plays it out to the death. We must guard against attributing the whole sorry sequence to fate. We are told of

Eustacia that instead of blaming herself for the issue she laid the fault upon the shoulders of some indistinct, colossal Prince of the world, who had framed her situation and ruled her lot. This allotment of responsiblity is not quite impartial. Indeed, though Mrs. Yeobright's death is the outcome of a series of ironic juxtapositions, these in themselves were not necessarily fated but for human badness or weakness—dilatoriness, fickleness, obstinacy. Nevertheless, the grand satire is the fact that from whatever cause, certainly from no definite and deliberate human motive, at the very movement when the well intentioned advance is made, events so fall out that the position is beaten back to a stage very worse than before, and with appalling consequences.

"For a time irony dies out, leaving us to watch the results of earlier fatalties, but soon after Clym has driven out Eustacia, fate recommends its flippant jests. His wrath subsides, his love conquers his reason, and he writes to her to come back. The letter miscarries by a few minutes. Clym, unconscious of this, sits in his house, late, alone, waiting the knock-call, cry. The night is of the worse—the heath is between the furies of wind and rain. At length a woman's footstep; he flushes hot—'surely it is Eustacia.' He opens the door and it is Thomasin comes to tell him of Eustacia's flight with Wildeve, the flight that ends in drowning.

"*The Return of the Native* is less desperate book than the *Mayor* : it is not so fiercely emphatic of 'the grimness of the general human situation'. The hero himself does not go down into utter darkness: and one may imagine there is yet before him much opportunity of finding a serener and more satisfactory world. But, however, that may be, the doctrine is clear—that when circumstance so wills it the strife of man is unavailing, and, that on the whole, circumstance does so will it". (See also Answer to Question No. 1)

Q. 7. *How in the Return of the Native Hardy has sustained the interest of his reader. Bring out his different sources.*

Ans. Hardy has sustained the interest of his reader by different artistic devices. Some of them are discussed below :

Fate: "Hardy represented fate in most of his novels as a malignant power thwarting his characters at inopportune

moments, usually tragically. He makes us feel its power especially when the victim has committed an error of judgment, as when Wildeve fails to keep the exact hour to meet Eustacia for the elopement, or carelessness when Mrs. Yeobright is not on guard against the viper, or an offence as found in taking the hundred guineas from Christian Cantle. While he does not directly mention fate in any case, he makes the reader feel it as an impending power ready at any moment to overturn or destroy human plans. It occurs frequently as coincidence as in the second chapter when Venn happens to be driving through Anglebury just as Thomasin, fainting, leaves the church when the clergyman refuses to marry them because of the wrong licence."

Irony: "Irony is defined as a subtle form of sarcasm in which apparent reality conveys disapprobation. Egdon Heath's unusual advantages and disadvantages are made responsible for the fate of both rustics and gentry. Clym's efforts to raise the standard of culture of the rustics results in failure of his aims. His being struck with blindness just as he approaches success is another example. Wildeve's winning the money results in its restoration to the rightful owners. Eustacia's beauty, aspirations, and qualifications lead to her downfall. Wildeve's efforts to meet Eustacia in her husband's presence is the cause of Mrs. Yeobrights death."

Satire: "Satire is holding up to ridicule, usually kindly or humorous, the weaknesses or mistakes of persons or actions. Its chief occurrence in this story points to the uselessness of endeavouring to impose culture on people already satisfied with their condition. It is also evident in the tragedies that came on the cultured inhabitants of the heath, while the rustics lived out their normal lives."

Nemesis: "This means retributive justice, that is, a sinner brings upon himself the punishment which fits his offence and which arises from his own actions. Wildeve's first relations with Eustacia at the pool end in his own drowning in another body of water. His cunning in winning the guineas from Christian is overcome by Venn's greater

cunning. Clym's overzealousness in his studies results in his blindness. Eustacia's eagerness for a romantic life leads to her death. On the other hand the submissive patience of Thomasin and Venn result in their final happiness."

Dramatic Situations: "These are related to suspense, where the reader's attention is aroused intently on the situation. Its most striking example is that of the drowning of Eustacia and Wildeve. Lesser examples are found in the games of dice, making the wax image, the serenade of the rustics at the Quiet Woman with Mrs. Yeobright and Thomasin in the adjoining room, Eustacia's presence in the mummer's play. Mrs. Yeobright's rejection from Clym's house, and Eustacia's hesitation with the pistols."

Descriptions: "Those outstanding are of Egdon Heath, its primeval state, moods, colours, vegetable and animal life, its physical features of barrows, roads, valleys, pools, and ravines, its weather, clouds, rains, storms, and sun and moon. These descriptions, in the mind of some critics, are overdone and too obscure in their poetic metaphors and unfamiliar illustrations. But it is only right to note the beauty and skill in interpreting the swarms of insect and other life in describing Clym at work with his faggot cutting, and the music made by the wind varying with each tree leaf or blade of grass in accompaniment to Eustacia's sighs as she waited for her lover on Rainbarrow. Descriptions of persons are frequently indefinite, detached, and modified with comparisons taken from outside sources. Only occasionlly are we given an account of the appearance and furnishing of houses. More attention is paid to dress, especially in that of the mummers."

Contrast: "All the characters stand out in contrast except Thomasin and Venn. Pictures of Paris contrast with heath life and the rustics are constantly introduced to show the difference of their life from that of the wealthier. The rustics themselves are all different except Humphrey and Sam."

Suspense: "The first suspense arises in the probability of the marriage of Thomasin and Wildeve. The second one

comes with the arrival of Clym and his acquaintance with Eustacia. The first is apparently solved early, and the future events surround this. The final outcome is well concealed to the end, although dreams, the weather, and Mrs. Nonsuch's image give us hints. Minor suspense, such as Eustacia's part in the mummer's play and Wildeve's visit to Eustacia's home, occur frequently."

Humour: "The stark tragedy of the story gives little opportunity for humour either in situations or conversation. The exchange of quips and retorts among the rustics may be called grim humour, especially in the needling of Christian and his father by Fairway and the others. The protests of Christian as to his manhood and his handling of the guineas are the most amusing features. The boasting of Cantle over his early accomplishments, his songs, and the love of gossip, especially by Fairway and Humphrey are other examples. The incidents of the mummers' play, making the feather mattress, Thomasin's refusal of Clym in favour of Venn, and Charley's fascination over Eustacia are serious to the participants but add to the humour of the story."

The Supernatural: "There is little evidence of belief in the supernatural among the higher class, unless we include the effect on Eustacia of her dreams. The more ignorant of the rustics believe in witchcraft, particularly Christian and Mrs. Nonsuch. They all had their fears and doubts as to the efficacy of religion and church going. Christian's fears of night and of being alone even in the daytime are proofs harmless in their consequences, but Mrs. Nonsuch's stabbing Eustacia in church with a needle and making and melting the wax image exemplify its harmful consequences."

Customs of the Rustics: "Hardy takes advantage of the opportunity of his story to describe in detail the old-time customs of the heath people. The story opens with the perpetuation of the old Druidical ceremony of kindling bonfires marking the onset of winter. It is followed by the customary serenades for newly married couples. Venn illustrates the peddling of reddle to the sheep owners. Illustrations are given of the evening gatherings of the rustics, dances, a mummers' play, the occupations of peat and faggot cutting, the treatment of a viper's poison, the maypole observances,

getting a lost bucket from a well, a peddler's lottery, and making a goose-feather mattress as a wedding present. Their purpose is to give information, to add interest, to reveal character, and in some cases to enter the story as influencing the course of events."

The Songs: "Hardy, essentially a poet, makes little use of them here, probably none of them original. The only characters using them are Grandfer Cantle and Clym. Grandfer, a musician at heart, knew many old ballads and delighted to show his skill in singing them, always having one suitable for the occasion. The reader is curious over the marking of the accented syllables, which seems to indicate the emphasis placed upon the corresponding notes as he sang. These songs add variety and interest to the story in the atmosphere they provide. Clym's longer French song over his work, revealing his contentment with his fate, has a more dramatic significance in its harmful effect on Eustacia. It removes from her all hope of Clym's going to France."

Letters and Their Significance: "The first letter is that from Thomasin to Diggory in Book 1, 9. It acquaints us with the early relations between the two and explains Diggory's patience and work in securing her. Its style shows Thomasin's culture."

"The second, Book 2, 9, was written by Eustacia to Wildeve and delivered by Diggory Venn. In it she refuses to have any further relations with him. It leads to his immediate marriage with Thomasin."

"The third, Book 2, 10, is from Clym to his mother during a temporary absence from his home, inquiring about gossip circulating about Thomasin's broken-off marriage to Wildeve. It results in Thomasin's hurrying her marriage to Wildeve before Clym returns home."

"The fourth, Book 5, 6, was written by Clym to Eustacia, asking her to return to him. It was to be delivered by Fairway to Eustacia, but fate intervened in delivery and it's failure to reach her led her to continue her elopement with Wildeve, leading to the death of both of them."

Q. 8. *Give a critical estimate of the novel, The Return of the Native.*

Ans. Giving an estimate of *The Return of the Native* Evelyn Hardy has observed in *Thomas Hardy—A Critical Biography* : "*The Return of the Native* is now acknowledged to be the finest work of Hardy's middle age and one of the prose masterpieces of our language. Yet when it was published it received little praise. In view of its eminence today it seems hardly credible that contemporary critics could call it 'inferior to anything of Hardy's which we have yet read,' and could only grudgingly admit that there were 'elements of a good novel in it...' passages showing 'good workmanship' and good descriptions. It contained 'original thought and writing,' and it had a certain 'ruggedness' and 'earnestness and fantastic power.' But, having said this, nine leading journals proceeded to damn the book. It was 'artificial,' the 'story did not satisfy' since it was not amusing; 'nature-worship' was all very well but this went too far; the movement, characters, action and conclusion were all lame ; it repeated itself and was merely a clever parody of Hardy's earlier work ; the dialect was confusing and presented readers with 'linguistic puzzles'; one was led into another world but one felt lost, and 'further than ever from the madding crowd': the author had a 'keen eye for the picturesque' but he could not draw: he had wasted his powers in painting a character like Eustacia who only wished to gratify her sensual passions, and the portrayal of what these would very likely lead to was not fit reading for the British public, who did not admire *Madame Bovary*: finally, the author missed being a really 'great man.'

"The *Contemporary Review* recognised Hardy's similarity to Browning, and praised his treatment of 'Nature in her lonely greatness,' but the reviewer regretted that, in heightening Nature, Hardy had dwarfed the human characters, who seemed in comparison 'sordid, stunted, blundering and ignorant.'

"The criticism that it was a mistake to create Eustacia, 'who only wished to gratify her sensual passion,' is still being made today. So eminent a critic as T.S. Eliot remraks that

it does not seem particularly 'wholesome' or 'edifying' to him that:

> 'only in their emotional paroxysms (do) most of Hardy's characters come alive. This extreme emotionalism seems to me a symptom of decadence...Strong passion is only interesting and significant in strong men: those who abandon themselves without resistance......'

In America *The Return* was hailed as 'one of the best serial novels of the year' (1878): but Hardy had to wait ten years before a fellow-countryman and a fellow poet, John Addington Symonds, confessed that the book had charmed him with its 'unusual freshness and vigour.' No one seems to have recognized the classical precision of design which shelters the ardently romantic conception—for here Hardy consciously observed the unities throughout; the justness of the poetic vision; the book's mastery over both the imagination and emotions of the reader, a power peculiarly Hardy's own; its essential truth, the inevitability of the tragedy inherent in it. Nor were the critics moved by the anguish of human hearts whose needs, whose hungers, are greater than their powers of perception, who perversely seek a way into life through love, very often love of the wrong person. The wringing pathos of some of the scenes also escaped them. One can hardly bear to read the description of Clym tying the strings of Eustacia's bonnet when she is leaving him and her own hands tremble too violently to do so—a scene in which the woman is washed clean of vanity by her grief, and the man steels himself against tenderness.

"They did not realize in criticising the book thus that they were taking *The Return* out of its place in time—in the literature of the period and in Hardy's own life. For as McDowall has pointed out, Hardy here allies himself with the earlier Romantics:

> with all the sensibility of the 19th century, in turning from orthodox beauty to the expressiveness of wild places; but instead of taking those as an escape from the fetters of life he takes them as a symbol of the facts of it. Egdon is valued for its *likeness* to what we know.

As for Hardy's development, *The Return* was an explosion into the truth and reality of his own nature and idiosyncracy,

and a revolt against asceticism and so-called Christian morality. Here for the first time he was fully himself: the mood, the setting, and the philosophy implied by that setting which it interprets, are peculiarly his. Yet he keeps himself in abeyance, his character does not over-intrude: a perfect balance is kept between the parts played by the characters and by Fate, or Chance, as well as a balance between creator and creations.

"*The Return of the Native* is the most pagan of all Hardy's books. The pagan 'zest for life', which J. S. Mill had implied was a feature of 'early civilizations', is one of its main themes. The mumming which savours of pre-Christian drama, the gipsying, the maying, the burning of the wax effigy and other superstitious practices, the lighting of the wild Beltane fires, above all the dancing, whether round the garlanded maypole or the whirling nocturnal flames, are all part of this pagan conception, expressed with a passionate vitality which exceeds allusions to it in a work concerned with a similar theme—*Jude the Obscure*.

> Indeed, the impulses of all such outlandish hamlets are pagan still: in these spots homage to nature, self-adoration, frantic gaieties, fragments to Teutonic rites to divinities whose names are forgotten, seem in some way or other to have survived mediaeval doctrine.........

that is, the teaching of the mediaeval Church. The number of similar allusions to pre-Christian and classical races, places, heroes, heroines and goddesess, poets, philosophers, legends and monuments is remarkable; they are more numerous than in any other work of Hardy's and especially abound in the first four parts of the book. The wealth of descriptions and allusions implies something long repressed in the poet's nature, and this pagan side was never again so fully, so fitly, expressed."

Giving an estimate of *The Return of the Native*, Neill has observed in *A Short History of the English Novel*: "*The Return of the Native* (1878), which added considerably to his growing reputation, clearly shows Hardy's increasing tendency to despair. Nothing in his own life at the time, certainly not his extraordinary success as a novelist, can explain the

deepening gloom. But in these last works he became obsessed with the tragic issues of human endeavour and persistently refused to admit the possibility that fate could sometimes be indulgent and grant wishes. Egdon Heath itself becomes symbolic of the doom of man. The description of the heath is loaded with philosophy inspired by its sombre, elemental grandeur, the gloomy vastness in which every living thing seems to be swallowed up in the depth of the centuries.

> 'The sombre stretch of rounds and hollows seemed to raise and meet the evening gloom in pure sympathy, the heath exhaling darkness as rapidly as the heavens precipitated it. And so the obscurity in the air and the obscurity in the land closed together in a black fraternization which each advanced half-way. The place became full of a watchfull intentness now; for when other things sank brooding to sleep the heath appeared slowly to awake and listen. Every night its Titanic form seemed to await something; but it had waited thus unmoved, during so many centuries, through the crises of so many things, that it could only be imagined to await one last crisis—the final overthrow....Egdon Heath appealed to subtler and scarcer instinct, to a more recently learned emotion, than that which responds to the sort of beauty called charming and fair.'

"The story, which has the sombre heath as its background, is one of frustrated idealism and unhappy love. Clym Yeobright, a diamond merchant who has been living for some years in Paris, grows tired of his futile and artificial occupation, and returns to his native Egdon Heath, resolved to become a school-master.

> 'He had a conviction that the want of most men was knowledge of a sort which brings wisdom rather than affluence. He wished to raise the class at the expense of the individuals rather, than the individuals at the expense of the class. What was more, he was ready at once to be the first unit sacrificed.'

"Clym begins to study, and is making great progress towards fulfilling his ambition, when his eyesight fails and he is forced to become a furze-cutter on the heath. This drives the beautiful, selfish Eustacia Vye, who has married him, after a brief infatuation, in the belief that she can persuade him to go back to Paris, to despair. She resumes relations with her former lover, Damon Wildeve, who in his turn has married Clym's cousin, the gentle, selfless Thomasin

Yeobright to spite Eustacia. After the death of Clym's mother, for which Eustacia is indirectly responsible, she and Damon resovle to run away together, but they are drowned in the weir. Clym, despairing of happiness, finds his last vocation in the career of an itinerant open-air preacher.

> 'Some believed him, some believed not; some said that his words were commonplace, others complained of his want of theological doctrine; while others again remarked that it was well enough for a man to take to preaching who could not see to do anything else.'

The grim sense of tragedy and frustration in the novel is relieved by the ultimate happiness of Thomasin, who marries the honest, loyal reddleman, Diggory Venn."

———

CHAPTER XXIII

3. CHARACTER SKETCHES

1. Eustacia Vye

"Eustacia is the granddaughter of Captain Vye, who lives at Mistover on the heath. Her father was a bandmaster to a regiment stationed at Budmouth, a fine musician, and by birth, a Corfyote, or native of the Island of Corfu, off the north-western coast of Greece. He had met his wife while she was visiting there with Captain Vye, a man of good family. The musician took his wife's name, settled in England, and took pains with Eustacia's education, for which the Captain paid the cost. After his wife's death, Eustacia's father ceased to thrive, took to drink and died. Eustacia was then taken by Captain Vye to his home on the heath, from which he believed he could see the English Channel."

Hatred of the Heath: "If Captain Vye is attracted by the heath, Eustacia is repelled by its monotony, from which she seeks relief in dreams of love :

> To be loved to madness—such was her great desire. Love was to her the one cordial which could drive away the eating loneliness of her days. And she seemed to long for the abstraction called passionate love, more than for any particular lover.

"The girl, who is nineteen when the story opens, blames Destiny for her isolation. The suggestion that she tends to actions of 'reckless unconventionality', already leads us to expect the sort of disaster which terminates her career. She is tall, of ladylike deportment, full-limbed and somewhat heavy, 'the raw material of a divinity ; she had the passions and instincts which make a model goddess, that is, those which make not quite a model woman. Without ruddiness, as without pallor, she had soft raven hair.'"

Direct Description : Her nerves extended into those tresses, and he temper could always be softened by stroking them down. When her hair was brushed she would instantly sink into stillness and look like the Sphinx . . . .

She had pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries. Their light, as it came and went, and came again, was partially hampered by their oppressive lids and lashes ; and of these the under-lid was much fuller than it normally is with English women. This enabled her to indulge in reverie without seeming to do so ; she might have been believed capable of sleeping without closing them up. Assuming that the souls of men and women were visible essences, you could fancy the colour of Eustacia's soul to be flame-like. The sparks from it that rose into her dark pupils gave the same impression.

The mouth seemed formed less to speak than to quiver, less to quiver than to kiss. Some might have added, less to kiss than to curl . . . . One had fancied that such lip-curves were mostly lurking underground in the south as fragments of forgotten marbles. So fine were the lines of her lips that, though full, each corner of her mouth was as clearly cut as the point of a spear. This keenness of corner was only blunted when she was given over to sudden fits of gloom, one of the phases of the night-side of sentiment which she knew too well for her years.

Her presence brought memories of such things as Bourbon roses, rubies and tropical midnights; her moods recalled lotus-eaters and the march in 'Athalie'; her motions, the ebb and flow of the sea ; her voice, the viola. In a dim light, and with a slight rearrangement of her hair, her general figure might have stood for that of either of the higher female deities. The new moon behind her head, an old helmet upon it, a diadem of accidental dewdrops round her brow, would have been adjuncts sufficient to strike the note of Artemis, Athena, or Hera respectively . . . .

The Dominant Impression : "The dominant impression, conveyed by allusions to the moon, ancient helmet, a spear, the mystery of her eyes, the mention of Greek goddesses, and a true Tartarean dignity which 'sat upon her brow,' is one of pagan perfection of beauty, reminding us of Eustacia's Mediterranean origin on the paternal side. Egdon is the Hades of the exquisite girl, to whom 'the subtle beauties of the heath were lost . . . . she only caught its vapours.' She is a case of grandeur of person and temper, stranded in 'a strange state of isolation,' and 'idealizing Wildeve for want of a better object . . . . there was only one circumstance which could dislodge him, and that was the advent of a greater man.' She is, in short, the femme fatally of a grand tragedy.

"Eustacia carries with her on the heath her grandfather's telescope and her grandmother's hour-glass. These objects are symbolic of her desire to escape the monotony of the heath to a romantic life in distant Paris, and of her enforced imprisonment on Egdon, during which she must wearily watch "time's gradual glide away." One of the rustics supposes that 'Miss Eustacia had about as much in her head that comes from books as anybody about here.' This qualification, with her beauty, causes the rustics to link her name with that of the intellectual, handsome and gentlemanly Clym. At that thought, her imagination runs mad :

> Myriads of imprisoned shapes arose where had previously appeared the stillness of a void.

Romantic Imagination : "Her imagination, like Lady Macbeth's, leads to disastrous action. She shows obstinacy when she refuses Venn's request that she should relinquish Wildeve to Thomasin ; she shows an enterprising spirit and a disregard for conventional behaviour when she takes the part of the Turkish Knight in the mummer's entertainment. It is ironical that she should take the part of the pagan personage in the play. She proves to be highly sensitive when she is troubled by proximity on that occasion to the man about whom she has created such a blaze of glory in her own mind ; she is modest and diffident when she suffers from fear, love and shame, to the extent that she has to slip away from the scene. Even then, there are forshadowings of the coming tragedy, appropriately expressed in terms of pagan mythology : 'She had a sense of the doom of Echo. The unreasonable nimbus of romance with which she had encircled that man might be her misery.'

Defects of Character : "Eustacia is jealous when she sees Thomasin in conversation with Clym ; she is fickle in her forgetfulness of Damon Wildeve ; she is conniving in her sudden resolve to release Wildeve, so that he will marry Thomasin, leaving the way clear for her marriage with Clym. She is foolish enough to marry a man in the hope that she can change the direction of his ambition, and so shine in Paris."

Her Manner : "In Eustacia's manner, there is a deceptive calm, which has a store of great power behind it ; she speaks 'with that drowsy latency of manner which discovered so much force behind it whenever the trigger was pressed.' At one minute there will be intensity of life behind her words, at another, she will exhibit an easy and dignified calm. Her air is usually slumberous, as her passions are 'massive rather than vivacious.' "

Opinions of other Character : "The other characters have different impressions of her, which indicate her complexity. Eustacia's superiority and air of mystery make Susan Nonsuch fear her as a witch. The rustic boy, Charley, adores her. The heath-dwellers regard her with respect and awe, as 'a woman who cares for nothing at all.' In her grandfather's estimation, her escapade as a mummer is little worse than amusing. To Mrs. Yeobright, she is 'too idle to be charming, lazy and dissatisfied. But that is not all of it. Supposing her to be as good a woman as any you can find . . . . she certainly is not.' As her son's infatuation proceeds, the girl is a 'hussy,' of whose friendship with Wildeve she takes a dim view. Wildeve is sufficiently enamoured of her to marry another woman when she rejects him, partly in order to save his own face, but partly also to spite her, as he thinks. In proportion to the degree to which Eustacia is unattainable, he longs after her.

"To Clym, who is at first attracted by her beauty and her superiority to her environment, she is 'luxurious,'—'excellently educated' and highly desirable as a wife. Even after his mother's death, her influence upon him begins to return once the first bitterness is past."

Action after the Climax : "In the climax of the story, where she is the cause of Mrs. Yeobright's being turned from the door, she shows a high degree of pride in resenting the older woman's apparent insult. Innocent of any serious moral lapse, she feels that Mrs. Yeobright's discovery of Wildeve in her home would be merely unpleasant, and not greatly to be feared (though to be prevented if possible). She is the victim of fate when she thinks her husband will waken,

and he fails to do so. She lacks courage when she dares not tell her husband of this circumstance, and waits for him to hear of it from another source.

"Eustacia is selfish and wanting in sympathy, then, in her relationship with her mother-in-law, and with her husband. When Clym is struck with an inflammation of the eyes, her one concern is that he cannot take her to Paris, but instead condescends to a lowly occupation, condemning her to live for an indefinite period on the heath. She is sufficiently strong-willed to discourage Wildeve until her affairs decline, and then she allows him to increase her discontent with his pity and flattery. She will not stoop to explain to her husband that she has not been dishonourable in her friendship with Wildeve, when he demands this information.

"Eustacia's pride saves her from ignominy in the end, when she refuses to submit to the humiliation of fleeing to Paris as the mistress of Wildeve. She instead chooses death in the weir—at the very time when her husband, whose love for her is returning, is trying to bring about a reconciliation."

Another critic comments upon the character of Eustacia in the following words : "Eustacia is a masterpiece of pathetic satire. 'Queen of night', she is described in the most gorgeous chapter, gorgeous, with a royal pomp and pride of magnificent phrases, but all perfectly restrained and measured. She was a dreamer of great dreams, and in love with the imageries of an heroic love : allied with the rich and solemn beauty of things, a votarist of supreme powers, majestics, and splendours, rather felt than conceived : her looks and ways, those of antique divinity : a lonely, passionate, and hungering spirit, in a marvellous form, among the wastes of Egdon : set apart for tragedy to come. Thus far, she is an imperial recluse, of a grandeur equal to that of Egdon itself : but Hardy did not create her, without indulging her sense of humour. She is drawn, a very rival of Rochel's great portrait in *villette*: but she has not tragic chance of stage. In bitter contrast with her ideals, she has but the wretched wastes of Egdon, the stupid labourers, the maddening unworldliness of the wilderness : and she knew Budmouth in

earlier days: just as that respectable place was to her a modern Paris and an ancient Rome, so Damon Wildeve was a very prince of romance: a trivial fellow of decent look and a little education. Rejecting him for Clym Yeobright, she takes Clym for a born leader of men, who will go with her into all the brilliance of all the world. She finds him bent upon plain living and high thinking, and is in despair, desolate and famished, outside the whirl of pleasures, triumphs, joys. Her pitiful standards of greatness, pitiful ignorance of life, pitiful hunger of heart, not wholly vulgar nor absurd, yet in large measure both, make her a masterpiece: seldom has a woman's impatient craving for the fulness of life, and the freedom of action, been so set down in words: no doubts, whether to call the portrait the most cruel of the caricature or the most superb likenesses. But without doubt Eustacia was both lamentable and ridiculous: contrasted with Egdon she could not suffer 'Egdon reduced to insignificance by its seemed and antique features the wildest turmoil of a single man' and still more the rushing rhetoric of this woman's vehement longings, those

'Imperials fantasies.'

Hardy's control over his art is a good example, for our days of tempestuous writing: an example of sanity, of beauty and of strength.

"Had Eustacia been made a goddess, the world would have felt no change in its government. 'There would have been the same inequility of lot, the same heaping up of favours here, of contumely there: the same generosity before justice, the same perpetual dilemmas, the same captions alternation of carasses and blows as we endure now"

2. Clement Yeobright (Clym)

Appearance and Attitude: "When Clym returns to the heath, he is not yet thirty years old. As Eustacia for the first time scans his face, it was really one of those faces which convey less the idea of so many years as its age, than of so much experience as its store. . . . The face was well shaped, even excellently. . . . Had Heaven preserved Yeobright from a wearing habit of meditation, people would have said 'A handsome man' . . . But an inner strenuousness was preying

upon an outward symmtery, and they rated his look as singular". . . .

> As for his look, it was a natural cheerfulness striving against depression from without, and not quite succeeding. The look suggested isolation, but it revealed something more. As is usual with bright natures, the deity that lies ignominiously chained within an ephemeral human carcass shone out of him like a ray.
>
> He had been a lad of whom something was expected. Beyond this all had been chaos. That he would be successful in an original way, or that he would go to the dogs in an original way, seemed equally probable. The only absolute certainty about him was that he would not stand still in the circumstances amid which he was born.

Early History: "At the death of Clym's father, a neighbouring gentleman had undertaken to help him by sending him to Budmouth, from which town he went to London, and soon to Paris, from which he returned to Egdon after being launched on a prosperous career in the diamond business. The rustics assume that the reason for his return is the making of new arrangements, because his mother is to be left alone in the house at Blooms-End, on account of Thomasin's marriage. The plan to teach night-school to improve the rustics, however, had made him abandon the notion of ever returning to the vanity of his former calling. His mother had at one time hoped that he and his cousin Thomasin might marry."

Love of the Heath: "Clym is a noble figure in the novel, a man who can sing a song when beset with adversities. He is attracted to the complex Eustacia, and also the simple Thomasin. He is romantic in his response to the fascination which Eustacia exerts over him. He is passionately fond of the heath; it brings him and Eustacia together, and is the power which finally separates them."

> If anyone knew the heath well, it was Clym. He was permeated with its scenes, with its substance, and with its odours. He might be said to be its product. His eyes had first opened thereon; with its appearance all the first images of his memory were mingled; his estimate of life had been coloured by it; his toys had been the flint knives and arrow-heads which he found there, wondering why stones should 'grow' to such odd shapes; his flowers, the purple bells and yellow gorse; his animal kingdom, the snakes and croppers; his society, its human haunters. Take all the varying hates felt by Eustacia Vye towards the heath, and translate them into loves, and you have the heart of

> Clym. He gazed upon the wide prospect as he walked, and was glad.

His Pride and Reason: "Like his mother, he is gracious to the rustics; he and she wait upon them at the Christmas party. He shares the family pride of his mother and cousin. When he resents the mortification of Thomasin's being jilted on her wedding-day, he is practical enough to question the wisdom of his cousin's union with Wildeve. He also has pride in the scene with Mrs. Yeobright, when he leaves her roof over Eustacia; he shows it again in his unrelenting attitude to his wife after their quarrel, and makes overtures too late. He is sensible and sympathetic when he hears of Susan Nonsuch's witch-test, given to Eustacia. His love for Eustacia (who in contrast, is not a model woman), is 'as chaste as that of Petrarch for his Laura.'"

His Idealism: "The rustics consider Clym to be a good-hearted young man, but at first regard his scheme of keeping a school near Egdon as somewhat pitiful—still

> Yeobright loved his kind. He had a conviction that the want of most men was knowledge of a sort which brings wisdom rather than affluence . . . what was more, he was ready at once to be the first unit sacrificed. . . . He was a John the Baptist who took ennoblement rather than repentance for his text. . . . The rural world was not ripe for him.

His Will-Power: "In dealing with his personal problems, Clym shows a good deal of resourcefulness; his mother's opposition to Eustacia does not prevent him from marrying her; Eustacia's opposition to his ambition of teaching on the heath does not deter him from studying. After the deterioration of his sight, his pride does not prevent him from working as a furze-cutter on the well-loved heath."

His Tragedy: "In Hardy's novels, man is often the victim of fate, and woman is the victim of man. Wildeve brings misery to both Thomasin and Eustacia. Clym, partly as the result of circumstances, brings disaster to his mother through his marriage to Eustacia. After Mrs. Yeobright's death, his devotion to her memory and his sense of guilt lead him to extremes in his anger against his wife. Again, his pride and wrath keep him from summoning Eustacia home

until it is too late, so that he bitterly speaks of himself as having sent two women to their deaths.

"He is the one sombre figure at the end of the novel, refraining from participation in rural pleasures and domestic events. Nevertheless, he is not quite defeated, as a strong moral sense urges him on to action:

> He did sometimes think he had been ill-used by fortune, so far as to say that to be born is a palpable dilemma, and that instead of men aiming to advance in life with glory, they should calculate how to retreat out of it without shame. But that he and his mother had been sarcastically and pitilessly handled in having such irons thrust into their souls, he did not maintain long. It is usually so, except with the sternest of men. . . .
>
> Thus, though words of solace were vainly uttered in his presence, he found relief in a direction of his own choosing when left to himself.

"Love of the heath remains, so that he wanders frequently where forgotten Celtic tribes of dyed barbarians erected the barrows: 'Yet they all had lived and died unconscious of the different fates awaiting their works. It reminded him that unseen factors operate in the production of immortality.

'Thus, Clym, aware of the elements of human will and inexorable fate in the human tragedy, finds 'his vocation in the career of an itinerant open-air preacher and lecturer,' whose business is to bring enlightenment to the men and women of Egdon Heath."

Clym as a Modern Man: As already stated Clym Yeobright is the most direct representative of Hardy himself. He is vacillating between Paris and Egdon and between Eustacia and his mother. Thus there is a war of intellect and instinct in him. Apart from his conflict of intellect and instinct, he is instinctively divided as well. He continuously swings between Eustacia and his mother. His tragedy springs from his divided personality. The two equally opposing forces are never stabelized in him and the result is the death of two women for whom he later on repents. Referring to this dramatic conflict a critic remarks : "The *Return of the Native* may be regarded either as a story of Eustacia torn between

Egdon and Clym Yeobright or as one of Yeobright torn between Eustacia and his mother."

Commenting upon the character of Clym another critic says : "He embodies a favourable idea of Hardy's, that of thought as a disease of the flesh, an idea that is culminated in Jude's tragic little son. Father Time. Hardy is student of the effects of time and circumstances upon the human form. Elsewhere, in introducing us to Elizabeth Jane, he shows how poverty is beginning to make its impression in her face. But thought digs deeper. Clym Yeobright's age, as expressed in his face, is to be measured by the intensity of his experience; its beauty begins to be overrun by its parasite thought : an inner strenousness preys upon the outer symmetry. Whatever its physical disabilities, the trait makes him an admirable philosopher. Though be can rebel, in high Promethean fashion, against the gods, his mind is elastic enough to take in ill-fortune as well as good. When his sight almost goes, so that he has to take up his project of opening a school and perhaps reading for a degree, he nonchalantly turns to turf and furz-cutting at half a crown a hundred, and finds a calm enjoyment in his work. He becomes mere a brown spot in the midst .... of gorse : his daily life is microscopic, his world limited to the insects within a circle of few feet. But the quality here shown is less admirable in its application to human relationship : His mother warns Eustacia—"you will find that though he is as gentle as a child you know, he can be as hard as steel!" His effort to get Eustacia back is the act of an intellectual, and a proof of how blind a guide cold reason can be . . . . He is the strongest man in all Hardy. Others have an equal enduring power, but his is the smashing strength of a great machine, besides, which Henchard's easily turned rash is almost pathetic. Yeobright's treatment of his mother and his wife is cruel in its unflinching hardness : Clare and Knight merely resist the unpleasant facts they come up against. Yeobright daminates facts. Clare and Knight are simple egotists : Yeobrights' attitude is based on the considered philosophy of life called egoism. Only once, to show himself, human, does he give way to weakness, in his not inexcusable ravings after he found his mother, broken-hearted

and dying on the heath. The favouritism of authors, like those of parents, among their children, are not always altogether reasonable. Hardy thought Clym Yeobright, "the nicest among mv character." Clym Yeobright is a man who yields little allegiance to emotion, and much of the nobler spirit sort. His love for Eustacia is lofty and untainted by flesh. Nevertheless his general comprehension of truth is obtained rather through the medium of reason than through that of passion. His plan of life is closely considered and thought out, and from a nobly rational point of view. It is reason that brings him from Paris, formidable his didactic projects, gives him endurance under misfortune, and plays a considerable part, though, a part shared by emotions, in his quarrel and attempted reconciliation with Eustacia. Hence, though, his personality is great and strong, it has little of the supernatural brightness that illuminates Angel Clare."

3. Wildeve

Background and Appearance: "Damon Wildeve is described as having been an engineer who threw away his chance of professional success, and became the proprietor of the Quiet Woman Inn. Older than Thomasin Yeobright, 'by a good few summers,' Wildeve, like Eustacia, is a romantic with a double nature. Though he is the villain of the piece, he has good moments, as when he acknowledges his weakness in his inability to choose between Eustacia and Thomasin, admits himself to be the ruin of Eustacia, does not speak of his own good fortune, and makes provision for his wife before skipping to Budmouth with the other woman. Like Eustacia, he hates the heath, and like her, he is broken by it in his revolt against it. The rustics speak of him as 'a clever, learned fellow in his way—'a most as clever as Clym Yeobright used to be.' He is of a type little liked by other men, but much admired by the women :

" 'He was quite a young man . . . . The grace of his movement was singular; it was the pantomimic expression of a lady-killing career. Next came into notice the more material qualities, among which was a profuse crop of hair impending over the top of his face, lending to his forehead

the high-cornered outline of an early Gothic shield; and a neck which was smooth and round as a cylinder. The lower half of his figure was of light build. Altogether, he was one in whom no man would have seen anything to admire, and in whom no woman would have seen anything to dislike.'"

His Weakness: "He reveals himself to be lacking in principle when he is willing to leave Thomasin in a highly compromised position, having once taken her to Anglebury to be married. He provides a contrast in his weakness to the moral strength of Mrs. Yeobright and her son, who follow a high ethical code. Wildeve can be sufficiently objective to admit that Clym, in misfortunes and comparative want of means, is nevertheless a richer man than he.

"Evidence of his instability of purpose is abundant. Though dismissed with finality by Eustacia, he never fails to drift back into her orbit. He answers signals from Rainbarrow, thinking them Eustacia's, while he is pledged to Thomasin; he tries to make Eustacia discontented with her lot after her marriage, as he dances with her at the rustic fair:

> Obstacles were a ripening sun to his love, and he was at this moment in a delirium of exquisite misery. To clasp as his for five minutes what was another man's through all the rest of the year, was a kind of thing he of all men could appreciate.

"In the game with Venn, he is 'a nervous and excitable man . . . reckless, frantic, exasperated.' He has "a spirit of intrigue" which impels him to stand at Eustacia's house at Alderworth gazing at it and the moon."

"In connection with his preparations for flight with Eustacia, a few significant facts emerge. The flight is preceded by a mental struggle. Though he hopes Eustacia will allow him to accompany her to Paris as her lover, he has no intention of presuming on her predicament. Lastly, he loses his life in a futile attempt to save that of Eustacia in the pool. Why was he found clasping the limbs of Clym when Venn drags both to shore?"

4. Thomasin Yeobright.

Background and Appearance: "The daughter of a gifted local musician, now dead, is the niece of Mrs. Yeobright,

and the cousin of Clym. When Mrs. Yeobright finds her asleep in the reddleman's van,

> A fair, sweet, and honest country face was revealed, reposing in a nest of wavy chestnut hair. It was between pretty and beautiful. Though her eyes were closed; one could easily imagine the light necessarily shining in them as the culmination of the luminous workmanship around. The groundwork of the face was hopefulness; but over it now lay like a foreign substance a film of anxiety and grief. The grief had been there so shortly as to have abstracted nothing of the bloom which had as yet but given a dignity to what it might eventually undermine. The scarlet of her lips had not had time to abate, and just now it appeared still more intense by the absence of the neighbouring and more transient colour of her cheek. The lips frequently parted with a murmur of words. She seemed to belong rightly, to a madrigal—to require viewing through rhyme and harmony.

Her Bird-Like Manner : "Thomasin's simple character is a contrast to the complex character of Eustacia. Hardy frequently reminds us that she is bird-like in her ways, a happy creature of the heath.

> The oblique band of sunlight which followed her through the door became the young wife well. It illuminated her as her presence illuminated the heath. In her movements, in her gaze, she reminded the beholder of the feathered creatures who lived around her home. All similes and allegories concerning her began and ended with birds. There was as much variety in her motions as in their flight. When she was musing she was a kestrel, which hangs in the air by an invisible motion of its wings. When she was in a high wind her light body was blowing against trees and banks like a heron's. When she was frightened she darted noiselessly like a kingfisher. When she was serene she skimmed like a swallow, and that is how she was moving now.

Her Character: Her great mistake lies in loving Wildeve, who is in revolt against the spell of Egdon. She finally marries him in order to satisfy her personal and family self-respect, and is not blind to his faults as a husband. Her tact is shown in the letter she had written two years earlier, declining Venn's offer of marriage. Timothy Fairway tells Wildeve, 'The woman you've got is a diamond.' Though she cannot hold the affections of Wildeve, who considers her 'a pleasing and innocent woman,' she inspires Venn with a respect and admiration which make him devoted to her service. Clym is very fond of his cousin, and Mrs. Yeobright

would have liked her son to have chosen Thomasin as his wife. An optimist, she hopes that Eustacia and Mrs. Yeobright may become friends; before Clym's marriage she had tried to warn her aunt that she was "too unyielding" in opposing it.

"When Clym is ill after his mother's death, Thomasin does her utmost to comfort him. On the night of the storm, she braves the elements in order to try to avert the tragedy. She is a kind mother, mourns for her husband despite his worthlesseness, understands the desolation of Clym's soul, and finally knows contentment with Diggory Venn."

5. Mrs. Yeobright

Background: "The mother of Clym is a 'well-known and respected widow of the neighbourhood,' whose face shows like a cameo against the blackness of the heath when we see her first.

> She was a woman of middle-age, with well-formed features of the type usually found where perspicacity is the chief quality enthroned within. At moments she seemed to be regarding issues from a Nebo denied to others around. She had something of an estranged mien : the solitude exhaled from the heath was concentrated in this face that has risen from it. The air with which she looked at the heathmen betokened a certain unconcern at their presence, or at what might be their opinions of her for walking in that lonely spot at such an hour, thus indirectly implying that in some respect or other they were not up to her level. The explanation lay in the fact that though her husband had been a small farmer she herself was a curate's daughter, who had once dreamt of doing better things.

Her Honesty : "Mrs. Yeobright is a woman of strong will; this is apparent when she forbids the banns at the time Thomasin is to marry Wildeve. She has family pride when she feels her niece should go through with the marriage, when jilted. She is affectionate, as she loves both her son and niece, and is loved by them. She is horrified by the news that Clym means to abandon his lucrative career for teaching on the heath, since her nature is practical—perhaps this is the inevitable result of careful management of one's resources over a period of time. She has no use for Eustacia, and is forthright (if not rash) in her denunciation of her son's admiration of the girl. Her pride makes her hasty when she

accuses Eustacia of receiving money from Yeobright. She leaps to conclusions in leaving Clym's cottage on the heath. Her tragedy, therefore, is occasioned partly by her character, and partly by a malign fate which prevents the reconciliation through a series of misunderstandings.

> She had a singular insight into life, considering that she had never mixed with it. . . . We call it intuition . . . her life was very complete on its reflective side.

"She loves the heath, and is interested in the burial urns found on it.

"When so fundamentally fine a woman is cast forlorn upon the heath, she becomes an object of sympathy. She speaks to Johnny Nonsuch about her grief, in words not unlike those of King Lear under similar circumstances. Like Shakespeare, Hardy is ingenious in making us sympathetic to his men and women even while showing us their failings."

Her Influence : "After her death, Mrs. Yeobright is still a powerful force in *The Return of the Native*, as she is the agent by whom the disastrous rupture between Clym and Eustacia is accomplished, with the heath and all it implies as a still greater force in the background. At the end of the novel, Yeobright's thoughts are largely of her and of Eustacia. He even considers marriage with Thomasin—against his will—because his mother once desired it.

> It is an unfortunate fact that any particular whim of parents, which might have been dispersed by half an hour's conversation during their lives, become sublimated by their deaths into a fiat the most absolute, with such results to conscientious children as those parents, had they lived, would have been the first to decry.

"With his mother's will-power, Yeobright in the end carries out his original plan of teaching; but the story ends on the note of affection between a King and the mother who sits on her son's right-hand."

6. Diggory Venn

"The reddleman is a static, or undeveloping figure, who represents the norm against which the actions of the other characters are shown. To this norm, Thomasin ultimately conforms.

"Venn, a reddleman, is the 'deux ex machina' who works behind the scenes to smooth the thorny path of Thomasin. Two years before the story opens, he had proposed to her, been rejected and given up his profitable career as dairy man to wander on the heath as a reddleman. He is twenty-four years old, and is described as being dyed completely red by his wares. 'He was not temporarily overlaid with the colour; it permeated him.' He is a brilliant scarlet figure against the sombreness of the heath. (It will be recalled that the white face of Mrs. Yeobright was like a cameo against the same grim background.)

> He was young, and his face, if not exactly handsome, approached so near to handsome that nobody would have contradicted an assertion that it really was so in its natural colour. His eye, which glared so strangely through his stain, was in itself attractive—keen as that of a bird of prey, and blue as autumn mist. He had neither whisker nor moustache, which allowed the soft curves of the lower part of his face to be apparent. His lips were thin, and though, as it seemed, compressed by thought, there was a pleasant twitch at their corners now and then. He was clothed throughout in a tight-fitting suit of corduroy, excellent in quality, not much worn, and well-chosen for its purpose; but deprived of its original colour by his trade. It showed to advantage the good shape of his figure. A certain well-to-do air about the man suggested that he was not poor for his degree. The natural query of an observer would have been, why should such a promising being as this have hidden his prepossessing exterior by adopting that singular occupation?

"It is Venn who hears of Eustacia's close friendship with Wildeve in detail, tries to make Eustacia give him up, tries to bring Mrs. Yeobright and her son together, wins back the guineas on the heath, tells Yeobright of his mother's wish for his friendship, and rescues Clym from drowning. He is the hero of the romantic country idyll with which the book concludes."

Function of Deggory Venn : "The Reddleman seems to personify the interplay between the ballad-tale and the country environment that gives to Hardy's best novels their unique quality. Originally, Venn was to have no other function. 'He should disappear from the heath nobody knowing whither' Hardy said. Then, in deference to his and the fictional functions he tacitly accepted reading public, he

connected the Reddleman more ordinarily with the conclusion of the tale. Venn seems not to belong to plot or character, as these are unusually understood. He is like a chord, modulating between the heath and the fable. His craft, significantly, is a dying craft. 'Reddlemen are now but seldom seen.' Once reddle used to colour all rural life, thereabouts, challanging, as it were, the dark countenance of the heath. 'Reddle spreads its lively hues over everything it hights on.' The first account of Venn's tale is substantial, and his figure is so devised and used that, later on, every phrase regarding him flashes out towards a wider circuit of meaning. He exerts an old fascination, for he is particularly apt projection of Hardy's feeling for the country at this time : a man so to speak, dyed into a way of life, and that way fast disappearing. At times, a dream-like quality, enfolds him, 'a poetry of existence,' suggesting an unchecked, regressive, nostalgia in Hardy. But chiefly we feel in Venn those qualities of passive firmness, self-denying fidelity, and patient watchfullness, that Hardy values so much and connects with the intimacies and the routines of agricultural life. His is not a day-dream figure ; he is an effective emblem because Hardy represents him with detached accuracy as a particular practitioner of a particular trade. Local status defines his respectability and his 'good nature' allied to acuteness as extreme as it could be without verging on craft. Venn suggests, in fact, simultaneously, a poetry of existence, and the finances of the trade in reddle."

———

CHAPTER XXIV

1. A BRIEF SUMMARY OF *THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE*

Sale of the wife of a hay-trusser to a sailor: An unemployed hay-trusser, Michael Henchard has a wife and a daughter. He is about thirty years of age. In search of a job he comes to a village called Weydon-Priors in Upper Wessex. A fair is being held there. On knowing that no employment is to be found, he decides to stay there for some days and to wait for a chance. Since he is tired, he wants some drink and enters a drink booth kept by an old woman in the fair. This old woman sells secretly unlicensed storng liquors. Others take furmity, but Henchard takes secretly a strong dose of wine and gets intoxicated. His wife is very much troubled. In his intoxicated state of mind Henchard hears the auction of horses by a gipsy outside the booth. This has a very undesirable effect on his mind. The conversation in the tent regarding marriages of young people is also of a very lazy type. They discuss the disadvantages of a hasty marriage. Henchard thinks that he is a sad victim of such a marriage and communicates his feelings to the assembled company. As well he thinks that if the gipsy can get rid of an old useless horse by disposing it of, why can he not sell his wife who is most inconvenient to him in the present state of his life. He, therefore, stands up and offers his wife for sale to the highest bidder. At last a sailor who had by now come into the tent stands up and pays five guineas—the higest bidding and takes Mrs. Henchard away. The drunkard is happy and feeling no remorse he sleeps soundly in the tent.

Remorse and establishment at Casterbridge: The next morning he finds that he had committed a very grave mistake. Out of remorse, he takes a solemn vow never to take a drop

of drink throughout his life. He then tries hard to find out his wife and daughter but in vain for the sailor has gone far away. Ultimately Henchard establishes himself at Casterbridge.

Return of the wife with a new daughter : After eighteen years, the widow comes to the same place with her new daughter and finds her husband. Many things have happened during this long period. She had been taken to America—in Canada by her new husband Newson. There materially and morally, they could not do well. When the news of Newson's drowning in the sea came to her, she felt a sense of freedom and thought of coming back to Henchard. She had lost her daughter by Henchard and had got one by Newson. At Casterbridge she puts up in an inn called 'The Three Mariners'. She comes to know of a feast in 'The King's Arms' to be presided over by the Mayor of the town, her own husband. She becomes doubtful of her reception by him in such circumstances. However, she goes there and comes to know of the story of her husband's progress and his present state. At 'the King's Arms' some of the people criticize Henchard for the bad wheat that he has been supplying to the townfolk. Henchard declares loudly that if he is shown to turn bad wheat into good floor by somedbody, he would ractify the mistake. Suddenly there appears a young man, Farfrae who offers to solve the riddle. He, after giving a note, goes away to 'The Three Mariners' and after him goes Henchard straightway.

Appointmet of Farfrae as manager of Henchard, the Mayor : Henchard knew nothing about his wife and her daughter. Their meeting at 'The Three Mariners' brings them together. The wife listens every word of her husband. She now learns that her husband has totally changed. Henchard succeeds in engaging Farfrae as his manager. In course of time they become very intimate friends. Elizabeth Jane has also sought a part-time work in the establishment. She has slowly taken fancy to Farfrae who is simple, honest and sings well. And when he leaves 'The Three Mariners', she feels grieved as he wishes her good bye. She thinks that he is leaving Casterbridge. Her misunderstanding is cleared up when she finds him with Henchard, to whom she

is sent with a note from her mother. This note is concerned with their meeting at a certin place. During this interview a man, named Josua Jopp also comes to see Henchard. He comes in response to the promise of Henchard regarding the former's appointment on the manager's post. Jopp thinks that the post was reserved for him. But now he fiinds another man, Farfrae in his place. He goes, therefore, resenting and expressing his intention of revenge. Anyway, the interview between Jane and Hanchard is quite successful. Henchard is deeply affected by the letter of his wife and by learning that the handsome girl is his own daughter. He fixes a place and time for seeing him wife. Jane goes back and reports the success to her mother.

Welcome of the wife, Susan: On meeting his wife, Henchard is very much upset and so is the suffering woman. Their respective stories are told in this secret meeting. Henchard reveals his affair with Lucetta who had nursed him during his illness. There was scandal in air for some days, as he says. He should have married her but for his previous wife, whom he expected to come back to him. After that there was silence between them (Henchard and Lucetta). His wife also narrated the tale of her woe and disillusionment. Now an agreement is reached between them. It is that a dweling should be got for the woman and the daughter should be kept ignorant of the incidents. Then one thing more. Henchard should pay repeated visits to her in order to remarry her. This plan is contemplated and adopted to save the Mayor of his honour.

Remarriage of the wife Susan : On his return, Henchard confides the whole secret to Farfrae and he in turn gives the same confidence and love. Henchard gets a letter drafted for Lucetta, explaining that he wants to amend for the moral degradation of his former wife by remarrying her. The letter is posted and the intended marriage takes place. Every citizen present on the occasion congratulates the Mayor and his wife. Some doubt the happiness of this marriage, but on the whole the central note of the chorus is that of appreciation. In course of time, Henchard does not like that his own daughter should be called by a name different from that of his own. He is under the impression

that Jane is his real daughter. And he asks his wife for a change in her name. But this is a very light affair and is soon forgotten.

Farfrae advances the trade of his master very prosperously but the domineering personlity of Henchard comes in the way. He takes undue advantage of his situation as master. But Farfrae is a well-intentioned man. His friendship with Elizabeth goes on developing. He gives her books to read and she is now in the full bloom of her maidenly powers. A very odd incident takes place at this time. Farfrae asks a worker to go back his house and return in full dress. And Henchard who had known the late-coming habit of this labourer had asked him to work even without proper dress. This time Henchard becomes very angry and suspicious of Farfrae. Also he feels sad to think of the estrangement between himself and his manager who had reposed every confidence in him. The popularity of Farfrae is also a cause of concern to the Mayor. The result is that even conversation between Farfrae and Jane is prohibited.

The national Festival and Henchard's anxiety: The national festival takes place. Henchard has to make necessary arrangements for the occasion. A grand party of dancing and music is set up. Suddenly the weather changes and it begins to rain. The arragements are scattered. But Farfrae's insight succeeds for his arrangement have been made in a safer place. The result is that the people go to Farfrae's place. Even Jane is seen there. All this enrages Henchard. Jane dances with Farfrae. Hanchard loses all good conscience. Elizabeth is strictly prohibited from associating with Farfrae. Poor Elizabeth. !

Elizabath Jane's troubles and Return of Lucetta: Elizabeth comes to greater trials. Henchard begins to find more faults with her. She is called 'Miss Newson' and one who has regard for Farfrae whom Henchard regards as his big enemy. His treatment becomes unpleasant. God's grace comes to her and she accepts the service of a cultured lady who happenes to arrive recently at Casterbridge. Henchard feels happy to have got rid of this oddity. Irony it is, that he does not know that Jane is going to be an independent

woman with none else but Lucetta. By now Farfrae is also quite independent. A competition grows up between Henchard and Farfrae. Friendship is turned into commercial rivalry.

Death of Mrs. Henchard and disclosure of the secret : Meanwhile Mrs. Henchard dies of illness. She leaves a confidential letter containing the truth of her daughter's fatherhood. The envelope contains the instruction that it should be opened after the marriage of Jane. But curiosity forces Hanchard to read it at the moment. The disclosure of the secret disappoints him very much. His dislike of Jane becomes greater than ever. He writes to Farfrae that he has no objection to his meeting with Jane. Farfrae often visits Jane at the house of Lucetta where she is a maid-servant. But Lucetta falls in love with Farfrae at first sight. Naturally Jane is sad. Time makes her quite sure of her complete loss.

Rivalary between master and servant for Lucetta and Failure of Henchard's trade : Henchard begins to think of marrying Lucetta. He also has had a letter from her about her visit to his town. She had really come to the town to become Henchard's but now she is a changed woman, no more a simple and poor Lucetta. Money she had from her aunt's death and love she was getting from Farfrae. Farfrae unfortunately now becomes Henchard's rival in marriage also. Ironically enough, Henchard appoints Jopp his manager asking him to compete seriously with Farfrae. The result is a very sad one. The weather remains all through uncertain and Jopp proves quite inefficient. When the crop is expected to be bad one year and Henchard purchases wheat to sell it at a higher price, the crop turns out abundantly rich because of the sudden favourable change in the weather. Henchard is compelled to sell his stock at a lower rate. For compensation he has to mortgage some of his property.

Jane, the silent sufferer : Lucetta had kept Jane purposely. She wanted to marry Henchard whom she expected to come to her because of Jane. But now she wants to marry his very rival Farfrae. Unluckily she suspects love

between Jane and Farfrae and as such thinks of dismissing her. But can she do so? Still because of Jane she is able to see young Scotchman. Hence she uses Jane as a piece of chess-board. Jane learns resignation and has to live tragically and lonely.

Henchard becomes very anxious to marry Lucetta and against her liking he visits her at her house to decide the case. He threatens her to marry with him or he would disclose their past relations to Farfrae. But he forgets that a similar secret Farfrae also has. He gets her consent. Though Jane requests him not to marry, he is as heedless as ever.

Moral death of Henchard on the disclosure of his past life by the furmity woman and Marriage of Lucetta with Farfrae: The old woman who sold furmity at the fair twenty years ago appears in the town and behaves very loosely in the streets. She is arrested. Henchard in the absence of the Magistrate presides. This boorish woman declares in the Court that the man trying her case was no better than her, and relates the episode of the sale of his wife. The revelation destorys Henchard morally. His reputation goes to winds. Soon Lucetta comes to know of it and hastens to marry Farfrae. Forthwith she is secure against Henchard. Henchard one day saves Elizabeth Jane and Lucetta from the attack of a wild bull. Lucetta thanks him for this help, but when requested to him, she regrets her inability because of his past scandal and her own recent marriage with Farfrae. This news enrages Henchard. In an agitated state of mind he resolves and takes vow to take revenge upon his rival. Lucetta entreats him not to reveal her past relations but he makes no answer.

Bankruptcy of Henchard and his wildness once more: Jane leaves Lucetta's house because of economic troubles and suffers silently. She cannot go to Henchard who is morally and materially doomed. She saves money in order to become independent. She makes fishing nets. Meanwhile Henchard's goods are sold by his creditors. He thinks of committing suicide and one day goes to drown himself into the river. On the bridge of the river he meets Jopp. Old rivalry is

roused by Jopp in him by the declaration that Farfrae will one day buy Henchard's body as well as soul. Soon Farfrae meets Henchard and asks him to live with him. Though Henchard cannot reconcile himself to this loss of self-respect yet, owing to economic pressure he has to serve under him. The tables are turned. The servant becomes the master. It is time that does all. However, the pricking of conscience becomes strong in Henchard and in order to forget the remorse he breaks his vow of not taking drinks. He at once goes to an inn. He drinks deep, sings and dances, and as Farfrae and Lucetta pass by the inn he curses them violently. Wild as ever when in intoxication, he voices loudly to crush Farfrae like a twig in his hand. Elizabeth becomes anxious about Henchard and Lucetta begins to fear him. He may reveal her past at any moment and ruin her life. Once Elizabeth also sees him trying to fell Farfare from the top of the barn where corn is stored. She warns Farfrae about it. But Farfrae is not at all upset. He is good enough to buy a trade for Henchard. He knows the independent nature of his old master. In course of time Farfrae is elected the Mayor of Casterbridge. This embitters the soul of Henchard who now thinks that he should either improve his fortune or end his life by suicide. He decides to improve his fortune. Once Lucetta asks him to return her love-letters and he gives them to Jopp to be handed over to Lucetta. But Jopp who had been once offended by her for she had refused service to him, reads these letters to a company of wicked characters at 'Peter's Finger'—a permanent haunt of thieves and liar and uncivil people. These low people take great delight in these letters and decide to take out a procession with the effigies of Henchard and Lucetta on a donkey's back. After this the letters are delivered to Lucetta.

Visit of the Royal Personage and Henchard's dismissal from public activities by Farfrae : The visit of the Royal Personage takes place about this period. Farfrae, the Mayor of Casterbridge, makes all the preparations to receive him. Henchard wants to take active part in the activities but is disallowed and turned away. This pinches him to the soul He leaves the place in public disgrace. One day he enters the house of Farfrae to cause him mortal injury. A

deadly combat ensues between them. Henchard overpowers Farfrae but does not kill him for remorse takes possession of his heart. Later on he decides to go to Farfrae and beg pardon of him. But Farfrae had gone to some other village after the combat. Henchard is now completely overtaken by the horrors of his life and wants to end his earthly existence.

Death of Lucetta: The procession taken by the mischief mongers is not seen by Farfrae but Lucetta is totally upset by the sight of her ill repute. She becomes hysterical. No cure proves effective and despite the best efforts of the doctors to save her, she dies leaving Farfrae free for Jane. Henchard also sees the procession and the effigies in the water. This makes him doubly pained. He wants to make amends for his past life but it is too late.

Return of Newson; Departure of Henchard from Casterbridge; Marriage of Jane with Farfrae and Death of Henchard, the 'man of character': Henchard longs for peace of mind and soul. He thinks of living pleasantly with Jane in future. But even this is denied to him. Jane hopes for Farfrae. Accidentally Newson appears in the town and claims his daughter back from Henchard. But Hanchard tells him that she expired a few days after Susan's death and was buried by her side. But the matters are worsened for Newson learns the truth some way. The result is that whatever love Jane had for Henchard is dried up. Life for Henchard becomes unbearable. Farfrae requests him to keep up and opens a seed shop for him and he accepts it but the venture is not a success owing to his own impulsive character. As soon as he comes to know that his trick of lie to Newson is about to open, he bids goodbye to the town. He leaves Casterbridge in the same mental and physical state in which he had once entered it. He revisits the scene of the auction of his wife and repents and finally settles in a village not cut off from Casterbridge. After some days he comes to know of the marriage of Jane with Farfrae. He purchases a singing bird in a cage and walks to the town to present it to the married pair. But he has not the courage to enter the festivities. He leaves the cage in the house and after having a glimpse of Jane goes out to return no more. On seeing the cage, the

present by Henchard, Jane feels repentant and forgives him. She asks her husband to find out Henchard, but learns that the mighty soul has already departed from the earth for want of food and health. It is very miserable, but more pitiable than this is Henchard's will. It is not concerning the distribution of money or property. It directs that none should mourn for him and everybody should forget him and that no tomb should be raised for him. All feel deeply for him.

CHAPTER XXV

2. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. *Discuss the appropriateness or otherwise of the title of the novel*, 'The Mayor of Casterbridge'.

Ans. There cannot be two opinions about the significance of the title of a book. It is the title that expresses the spirit of a book. It is the book in itself. Recall the title of any book and the whole book begins to present itself before the mental eye. It is because of this very significant phenomenon that great authors have alway very aptly named their book. There can be reason, therefore, to suppose that Hardy should not have overlooked this aspect of composition. Even Shakespeare, who, as it is said, did not care much about the titles of his plays, has otherwise given quite appropriate titles to his dramatic pieces.

Hardy's novels have very poetic names for their titles, as for example, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, *The Two on the Tower*, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *The Woodlanders*, '*Far From the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, *The Hand of Ethelbarta* and *The Well Beloved.* These poetic titles are suggestive of various images and sensations. Besides these novels Hardy has given to those novels, which deal with the life of one dominating person, the name of this dominating character. It is because, the novel is written on an epic scale. It is concerned entirely with the life-history of one person, who predominates over all other minor characters in the novel. And in truth all the events in the novel are directly connected with the life of this central figure. In his famous novels *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure*, this view is held. These novels are primarily concerned with the life of Tess and Jude respectively. However, it does not imply that other characters are totally

insignificant. They are important but only in so far as they help us in estimating properly the character of the central figure. It is in the relation of these persons that the central figure expresses himself consciously or unconsciously. In *Tess* it is the heroine, Tess alone whom we remember ever after long years; so also in *Jude*, it is the hero Jude who captivates our imagination. Hence Hardy has named these novels after the names of his hero or heroine who play the dominant and central role in these novels.

Coming to *The Mayor of Casterbridge* we find the same thing. The novel has been christened after the name of the hero. Although the name of the hero is Michael Henchard and as such the novel should have been named as 'Michael Henchard', yet there is no loss of sense by the title as it is given. Henchard becomes the Mayor of the town of Casterbridge by sheer industry and energy and so many other virtues which he is born with. Hence the title is suggestive not only of the significance of the part played by Henchard in the novel, but also of his character. However, one doubt at this stage should be very well cleared up. One should not think that the name, the Mayor of the Casterbridge, can also stand for Donald Farfrae who like Henchard becomes the Mayor of the town of Casterbridge by virtue of so many qualities, personal and impersonal. The reasons against this doubt are very plain and let us discuss them as follows.

First of all we see that it is Henchard who is introduced to us from the very beginning of the story. The novel begins with him and his family. On the other hand the Scotchman comes in the story quite late. Then, we also notice that one of the three major events of the novel, upon which revolves the whole plot of this novel, namely the sale of wife by her husband takes place before the entry of Farfrae. It is this event that starts the novel. It is the beginning of the complications and their disastrous and painful resolutions that follow. And then it is Henchard, whose life is more closely studied by the novelist than that of any other character in the novel. It is Henchard who begins the plot, makes it complicated and then ultimately brings about its resolution. Evidently it is Henchard who is referred by the title of the novel.

Now we consider how far the title repesents the story of the novel and naturally that of its central character, *i.e.*, Henchard, the Mayor. Although we know from the report that Henchard is a poor hay-trusser, it is Henchard, the Mayor of Casterbridge, who is always before our imagination. Whenever we think of him we think of the various phases of his life in the town. Really Hardy has presented the man, as a rising tradesman, as a cornfactor and as a Mayor above all. In fact, it is in the capacity of the Mayor that Henchard's character has been so picturesquely and convincingly depicted. Even after his position is lost, Henchard does not lose its air. This becomes clear on the occasion of the Royal visit. He wants to receive the Royal Personage but is refused to do so. But no, he must receive and he does receive, although he is pushed out by Farfrae. Then the fall of his fortune takes place when he is the Mayor. He purchases corn thinking that the weather would remain unfavourable for crop, but his plan is defeated and he becomes bankrupt. Then the disclosure of his past life specially the act of selling his wife Susan at the Weydon-Prior Fair takes place when he is the Mayor of the town. Susan returns to him and remarries him during the period of his Mayoralty. As Mayor, he meets Farfrae before his remarriage. And after the death of Susan, Lucetta betrays him when he is Mayor. We thus see that the title represents quite faithfully the importance of Henchard's character at the Mayor of Casterbridge.

The title also suggests town life because there are no mayors in the country. And we see that the town, its various activities, commercial, recreational, judicial, religious, cultural and non-cultural are so very picturesquely painted in the novel. It is indeed a motion picture of town life in the Wessex country. We see markets in all the parts of the town, the shops have been so well described. We see the lanes of the town, and the inns of the town. It is indeed impossible to forget the Mixen-Lane where the letters of Lucetta are read and the skimmington ride is contemplated by the mischief-mongers. The 'Three Mariners Inn' has its special claim upon the reader for the meetings and interviews between Henchard and Farfrae on the one hand, and Farfrae

and Elizabeth on the other. No doubt, there are glimpses of rural life also in the novel, but it is the town life that is more important and striking.

Q. 2. *In what sense does Hardy call the hero of* 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' *'a man of characters' ?*

Ans. In the sub title of his novel Hardy calls Henchard, the Mayor of Casterbridge *'a man of characters'*. This sub-title explains to us the view which the author takes of the chief character of the novel. In 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' the sub title of the novel is, '*A pure woman faithfully presented*' and it gives us Hardy's view of the character of Tess. The adjective *pure* in the sub-title has been a headache to the critics and they have interpreted it variously. A similar difficulty is felt in understanding the sub-title of the novel in question.

Everyone has a particular character and it is simply absurd to say that particular man is a man of character unless we know something more than what we generally think of every individual. Hence in obtaining a correct understanding of the sub-title of '*The Mayor of Casterbridge*' it is important to know what Hardy himself means by 'a man of character'? Does he mean by it, a man of good character? This may at first sight seem to be the interpretation, for that is the meaning that the phrase usually bears. But on a deeper thinking we cannot accept this interpretation, at least, so far as the character of Henchard is concerned. Henchard does many things which we cannot expect from a man of good character. He sells his wife, wrestles with Farfrae, visits the weather-prophet, behaves ill with Elizabeth and tells a lie to Newson. These are the things which forbid us to regard him as a man of good character. Henchard is a compound of both good and evil qualities ; he is not exclusively good.

The sceond interpretation of the phrase under consideration can be that a man of character is one who possesses strongly developed qualities of his own, good or bad. He is different from a weakling or a man of no character, who has no qualities of his own, but allows himself to be ruled by the circumstances in which he is placed and who therefore manifests different qualities at different times. While a man of

no character has no principles and opinions of his own, but adopts those of other for the time being, and replaces them by others, when he happens to be in the company of those who profess different opinions, a man of character on the other hand, is one who has tenacity of purpose and who acts upon his convictions, and persists in the course of which he resolves upon, and from which no opposition can turn him away. Now if we take the sub-title of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* in the light of this interpretation, we find that Henchard is undobtedly, a man of character. He is, as Grimsditch remarks 'a man of principle and of rugged determination'. (Elaborate the answer from the character sketch of Henchard).

Another interpretaion that can be given to the phrase 'a man of character' is that Henchard is a man of human character, which is a mixture of good and evil, dark and fair. Gods and devils do not have character. They are either wholly good or wholly bad. But a human being has a character, for he is liable to do both good and evil. Judged from this point of view Henchard has to be recognized as a natural human being who conforms to the average standard of men and like them has storngly developed qualities both good and bad—"strong passions, prejudices, hatreds, obstinate self-will, generous impulses, the strength to make a vow and keep it in spite of many temptations". His nature is a mixture of strength and weakness. [Develop this assertion as well.]

In the end we might also take the phrase under discussion to mean that Henchard's downfall is determined by his character and not by fate (Also elaborate this statement).

Q. 3. *Observe* 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' *from the point of view of plot-construction, giving in brief the story of the novel.*

Or

"*Hardy is a master of plot-construction.*" *Illustrate the truth of this statement with reference to* 'The Mayor of Casterbridge'.

Or

Discuss that Hardy was 'liable to a kind of diabolical possession by the demon of plot'. Also illustrate this remark from 'The Mayor of Casterbridge.'

Ans. Thomas Hardy has been universally praised for his skill in handling the plot of his novels. It is said that his early training in the profession of architecture greatly influenced the technique of his novels. Certainly his plots have the symmetry and harmonious porportions of a gorgeous and beautiful building which gives us an aesthetic satisfaction of a very high and lasting order.

In the first place Hardy's plots are extraordinarily remarkable for their simplicity and coherence. There is always a sequence of cause and effect in the description of scenes and events. Nothing is superficial in the plot: what appears incongruous at first sight will on a serious contemplation turn out to be highly significant from the standpoint of plot-construction. We do not have, of course, the 'economy of plot construction' of the type of Henry James. Many a novel can be written out of the substance of a single novel of Hardy. But this is due to the fact that the creative powers of Hardy were immensely rich and fruitful. He used vast materials for his novels and with great skill and craftsmanship compressed them into a short compass. He possessed a wide experience of human life and knew how to exploit a single situation to its fullest possiblities. He was always something of a craftsman and builder. He built the vast structure of his novels with as many details as can be discerned in some huge Gothic mansion. Duffin rightly observes that Hardy's novels have plots which are self-supporting organic wholes 'and however-great the play of an external fate may be, the life or motive which is at the centre of each is essentially pscholological.' Duffin adds further that "every novel is an answer to the question, given certain characters in certain situations, and allowing for the irony of fate, what will happen—what will become of them?"

Hardy has utilized every device in the construction of his plots. Coincidences, chance-happenings eaves-droppings, turning up of old and long-lost relations, are all liberally exploited in his plots. He was a novelist who considered that a

story to be interesting must be complicated and full of exciting events. There is some truth in the remark that he was 'liable to a kind of diabolic possession by the demon of plot'. But it should not be forgotten that the complications which are found in the texture of his plots are not confusing or confounding. The reader is never misled into labyrinths He knows perfectly well why a particular event has come about, provided allowance is made for the vagaries of chance and the unimagined visitations of Fate.

In the light of these remarks we proceed to analyze and examine the plot of '*The Mayor of Casterbridge*'. . The plot of this novel can be divided into five parts—introduction, complication, crisis, resolution and conclusion. Let us now deal with each of these parts separately.

Introduction : The first chapter of the novel introduces to us Henchard, a poor hay-trusser travelling with his family in search of employment and who, being drunk, disposes of his 'home-spun' wife Susan to Newson, a sailor, and soon repenting and vainly searching for her and the sailor, settles in the town of Casterbridge. After a lapse of eighteen years Susan returns with Elizabeth, her daughter by Newson and succeeds in finding Henchard who has by now become the leading tradesman of the town, the Mayor of Casterbridge, the churchwarden and what not. In due course of time Henchard appoints Farfrae, a young Scotchman, his manager. Since Farfrae knows his job well, the commerce of Henchard flourishes by leaps and bounds. Henchard remarries his wife Susan and they begin to live a happy and peaceful life. Henchard reposes his full confidence in Farfrae and the youngman serves his master efficiently and faithfully. This is the introductory part of the novel.

Complication : Soon complications arise. The national festival takes place and Henchard's programme fails owing to the rainy weather, with the result that the business of Farfrae becomes a brilliant success. Elizabeth dances with Farfrae. This enrages the Mayor. He dismisses Farfrae from his service. In the meantime Susan dies leaving the fatal information enclosed in an envelope that Elizabeth is Newson's daughter (Hardy remarks that this step of Susan is responsible for

the complications and involvements of the theme since Susan also preferred the ignorance of Elizabeth to her wisdom. Keeping the daughter ignorant of her identity was thought by Susan very wise). Henchard loves Elizabeth as her true daughter and openly devotes himself to her. But one evening when he happens to open the envelope the tables are turned. Elizabeth is not his daurghter. He is dumb-founded and is face to face with a strange puzzle. This is a situation in which nobody can conquer himself easily and Henchard—a man of character, does what nature asks him to do. He becomes rough and indifferent towards the girl. The result is that she has to go away and enter the service of Lucetta, who has come to the town with the express intention of marrying Henchard after the death of Susan. There can be no doubt that tne appearance of Lucetta creates a flutter in the town. The chances of her marriage with Henchard are supreme But untoward things happen and the complications become very serious. After the dismissal of Farfrae, Henchard appoints Jopp the manager of his business. He makes large purchases as to make huge profits but, as the chance would have it, the crops turn out to be promising and the supply increases. The result is that the prices go down and Henchard's business is ruined. He becomes bankrupt and his property is auctioned to meet the demands of the creditors. This event can be easily explained. Even without the interference of a bad weather, the enterprise of Henchard is a sorry hazard. He depends upon the prophet. No sound businessman can so blindly risk his fortune on a prophecy. Henchard's own character is responsible for the downfall of his commerce. However, the part of weather is also no less significant. It deserts Henchard on an occasion when his life becoming already so highly complicated. Undoubtedly it is the last stroke of the 'sinister intelligence.' It is a cruel blow too much for a human being.

Crisis : Soon there occurs a crisis in the life of the Mayor. Farfrae has already met Lucetta and won her heart almost at first sight. Lucetta has turned her affection from Henchard. She has become so indifferent to Henchard that she gives excuses of not being able to see him. Also there is crisis in the life of Elizabeth. She loves Farfrae who in

turn now falls in love with Lucetta. The triangle is complete, and the suffering of the girl is intensified. However, she resigns herself to the situation quite stoically. As for Henchard he knows the development of Farfrae's love with Lucetta and also the fact that the young man is becoming daily more and more popular in the town and gaining power and pelf. Hence he extracts the promise of marriage from Lucetta almost by force in spite of the opposition of Elizabeth. The next morning comes another stroke of crisis in Henchard's life. A mischievous woman has been arrested by the police in the streets of the town. She knows the secret of Henchard's sale of Susan. Unfortunately she is tried by Henchard in the absence of the doctor. She reveals the event and at once Henchard's moral and social degradation comes upon his head, destroying the peace of his mind. Lucetta comes to know of it and hastily marries Farfrae far from the 'madding crowd.' Henchard knows in the evening she comes back from her wedding. The man goes to her with the expectation of getting solace and peace but meets only frustration and despair. There is no joy for him now. Farfrae is made the Mayor of the town. He comes to possess the whole property of Henchard. The master is reduced to the status of a servant, a journeyman, and the servant raised to the status of the master. The tables are turned completely. Soon the visit of the Royal personage takes place and Farfrae adds insult to injury on this occasion. The crisis has developed now to its full height'.

Resolution : Then begins the resolution of the crisis. Henchard leaves the service of Farfrae after he has been overthrown by the latter in a wrestling bout. He comes to live in the cottage of Jopp, whom he had dismissed long ago at the failure of his business. Lucetta is one evening very much distressed by the reading of her letters by Henchard to Farfrae. She is apprehensive of the nature of Henchard and requests him to return her letters to which he quite generously agrees. The next morning he gives 'the passionate bundle' to Jopp to deliver it to her. But this man Jopp, who knew Lucetta, when she was at Jersey and who had not promised any help in his employment in the service of Farfrae, falls victim to temptation. At the Peter's Finger

Inn he breaks open the bundle and reads the contents of the epistles to the assembly of rogues of all sorts. The result is that the skimmington-ride is contemplated and is actually taken out. Farfrae has been well-intentionally kept out of the scene by Longways. But Lucetta falls a victim to the game. Despite Elizabeth's effort to detract her gaze, she sees the effigies. She is awfully affected by the scene and before the day breaks she breathes her last. After the death of Lucetta, the chances of Farfrae's marriage with Elizabeth are brightened. The two converse together for long hours and come to each other as near as possible. Henchard knows the development of this love-affair but he does not disturb the pair. He soon meets one more disturbing situation. The return of Newson in search of his only daughter occupies an important place in the resolution of the tie of affection. Henchard informs the sailor that Elizabeth has died and is burried with her mother. The sailor goes back in good faith. Henchard never thinks that the sailor would ever return, but he notices him again after two years. Now there is no hope of peace in his life. He cannot retain the love of Elizabeth any more. The only thing possible for him now is to leave the town. He settles at a village fifty miles distant from Casterbridge. This, then is the part of the novel which is devoted to the resolution of the crisis.

Conclusion : Soon follows the conclusion. Really the reader can at once predict the conclusion. The lovers must be united in the company of Newson. And so it happens. Newson returns and the identity of Elizabeth is revealed. The scene of father meeting his long lost daughter is a masterpriece of the novel. Elizabeth becomes angry with Henchard but Newson defends the man when the young couple cross the limit. Soon Elizabeth and Farfrae are joined in marital tie amidst merriment and gaiety. Henchard returns to bless the girl on the occasion of her wedding, but instead of being welcomed he is rebuked. Leaving the gift he had brought for her, he goes away, heart-broken and dejected. He travels hungry and tired, while Whittle, whose mother had been helped by him, follows him in spite of his protestation. After a week Elizabeth finds the gold flinch, the bird dead, and is greatly mystified by the event. She comes

to know that this was the gift left by Henchard. She repents but too late. She goes out in a jig with her husband to make a search of him. After a long travel, they come across Whittle who informs them about the death of Henchard. He takes them to his cottage and shows the will left by the man in his clothes. The will is literally obeyed by the married pair. Newson, a true sailor as he is, goes to Budmouth, the sea town and the couple begin a career of resigned happiness.

The above classification shows how perfectly united is the plot of '*The Mayor of Casterbridge*.' No event is found to be useless. Right from the beginning to the end, the story runs organically, exploiting all the good old devices of plot construction. We may, thus, conclude by saying that Hardy is a past master in the art of plot-construction, and his novels have tales which are very systematically designed.

Q. 4. *Trace the element of surprise and suspense in* 'The Mayor of Casterbridge.'

Ans. Novel like drama exploits very largely the two most widely accepted devices, namely 'suspense' and 'surprise'. These two are the legitimate weapons of a novelist or a dramatist. Their use enhances the interest of a given work of art and makes it engaging and readable. Surprise is expressed when a situation arises which the reader had never expected before. The reader feels suspended when the solution of a predicament or complication does not seem possible. He goes on reading the story with a bated breath to know how the author would resolve the complication which to him, appears insoluble. Now the creation of such occasions in the novel as are charged with an air of suspense and surprise, is justified for obvious reasons. The vagaries of fate or chance and the whims and caprices of human personality are infinite. Nobody can say with certainty that a particular thing must happen at this or that occasion. Nothing is absolutely certain in the scheme of worldly things. The mysteries of nature are seldom known to man. Rather man himself is a stranger to himself. The unconscious personality of man is mysteriously hidden from his view. He cannot look into the womb of future. He cannot

guess or surmise with any precision or exactitude. Any thing may happen at any moment. And the unexpected things and events which happen in life give us surprise and that is why in a novel which is regarded as the representation of life, a frequent use is made of these elements.

Thomas Hardy has been often criticised for the exploitation of surprise and suspense in his novels. It is said that his novels are full of improbabilities and impossibilities. They are invented by the author per force to meet the requirements of the plot, and are grossly sensational. But this is not always the matter of fact. If we examine the plot of '*The Mayor of Casterbridge*' from an impartial point of view, we shall discover that the events and situations which at first appear improbable are in truth such as are perfectly consistent with reality and real life.

The very first event of the novel is highly surprising. We cannot believe that a man can sell his wife, however drunk he may be. Susan's sale is very dramatic and sensational. Then returns the wife with Elizabeth to her husband, Henchard who has become the Mayor of Casterbridge, after full eighteen years. It is also a dash of surprise. However, the most surprising and suspending event is that Susan does not give the correct information of Elizabeth's identity either to the girl or to her husband. And it is really on account of this that the greater part of Henchard's downfall and despair is sealed. How can a wife keep such a silly secret from her husband? We now come to another very important suprising event of the novel. It is the failure of the weather and Henchard's commercial ruin. How surprising are the ways of weather. Again Lucetta's love for Farfrae is a cause of surprise to us. She came to the town purposely for Henchard but suddenly got mad after the young Scotchman. Had she not loved Henchard before and expressed her desire after the death of Susan, her behaviour should not have caused any surprise and suspense. But such a devoted woman turning a coquette surprises us to the soul.

The appearance of the furmity-woman in the town is doubtless one of the most surprising and suspending events of the novel. She upsets the whole situation. Her part is

highly dramatic. We are really suspended the moment she reveals the past of Henchard in the court. The consequences are unforeseen. The reader cannot forecast the implications of this disclosure.

The return of Newson is the cause of greatest surprise and suspense. We know that old-ong lost relations and friends seldom meet. Really when Susan comes to the town, she knows that Newson has died a watery death. And although, the novelist remarks on this occasion about the uncertanity of her information, yet we cannot say for certain that Newson is alive and that one day he would come to reclaim his daughter. But the unexpected happens and Newson comes to reclaim his daughter, and we are surprised to the core. Not only this, our thinking is also suspended. We do not know what will happen now. We become highly anxious to know the consequences. But the sailor goes back disappointed by the bus which brought him there. Henchard having given him the lie leaves Casterbridge and meets with a surprising and unexpected behaviour from Elizabeth, who had by now met Newson and known the fact of her past life. We know this from Elizabeth but we do not expect such an unfeeling behaviour from the girl whom we have known so far to be a gentle and conscientious woman.

The above discussion is sufficient to show that Hardy has made a proper and frequent use of the elements of surprise and suspense in his novel '*The Mayor of Casterbridge*'.

Q. 5. *What part does chance play in the novels of Thomas Hardy, particularly in* 'The Mayor of Casterbridge'

Ans. According to Hardy it is the Fate which governs the world. "God is not in Heaven, and all is wrong with the world." The whole universe is a huge impersonal mechanism, directed by some automatic principle of life unknown, pursuing its mysterious end, utterly indifferent to the feelings of mortals. Man is working to one end, Destiny to another. These ends may coincide or they may not. Therefore, it is chance which decides the hapiness or sorrow of man. The opportunities are offered, but they are missed. Hardy says in '*Tess*' that "in the ill-judged execution of well judged plan

of things, the call seldom produces the comer, the man to love rarely coincides with the hour of loving. Nature does not often say 'see!' to her poor creature at a time when seeing can lead to happy doing; or reply 'Here' to a body's cry 'Where?' till the hide-and-seek has become an ikrsome, outworn game." Man and woman wander about the earth, like two halves of a perfect whole each waiting in cross abtuseness for the 'missing counterpart' and "out of this maldroit delay spring anxieties, disappointments, shocks, catastrophes, and passing strange destinties." This discord, in order that it may play an important part in human drama must be personified in some particular incarnation. Therefore, Hardy embodies Fate in various forms and one of the most important is chance.

It is significant how many of Hardy's plots turn on the revelation of some past action coming to light after being kept secret for some time. It is by chance that the actions which are forgotten come to light and play a ruin on the characters. To the characters themselves the past action may be dead ; they may have put their past action behind them. But they cannot escape their consequences, for the action has become a hostage which they have presented to Destiny and which Destiny may use against them at any time. It is seen that in the end of his novels some one who is almost forgotten returns and completes the tragedy. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* it is the sudden return of Newson, in *Far from the Madding Crowd* it is the return of Seargent Troy, in *The Return of the Native* it is the return of the native of Egdon Heath, and in *Tess of the D Urbervilles*, it is return of Alec whom we have almost forgotten and who in the end completes the tragedy.

Fate or Chance plays an important part in the fulfilment of Henchard's tragic destiny. After his initial act of sin of selling his wife and child, Henchard settles in the town of Casterbridge, and by virtue of his untiring energy and perseverance, attains to the status of Mayoralty. He enlarges his business, accumulates wealth and becomes the most prosperous man of the town. He is well-nigh on the way to happiness, except that he is occasionally tortured by a spiritual desire for human companionship, which too is fulfilled when

Farfrae, a young Scotchman, joins his service and agrees to work as the manager of his trade. Henchard loves Farfrae from the depth of his soul and pours his deepest brotherly affection on him, who also in turn adds greatly to the prosperity of his master's business by introducing into it new scientific and commercial devices. The two become 'inseparables' and feel greatly happy of each other's company. But Fate would not like it to be so. Soon minor events take place, the cumulative force of which estranges the 'inseparables' and creates an unbridgeable gulf between the two friends.

Deprived of friendship, Henchard then turns to Lucetta for love, but here again he finds nothing but disappointment. Lucetta who comes to Casterbridge mainly for the sake of Henchard, happens to see Farfrae and is at first sight bewitched by the charms of this Scottish youth. Henchard struggles hard to win back her love but all his efforts end in smoke. He prays to Lucetta, entreats her, implores her, threatens her but nothing helps him in washing a single word of the writ of his Fate. The furmity woman whom we have almost forgotten returns in the meantime and by making a public exposure of his past corrupt life, seals his social and moral doom completely. For fear of the scandal Lucetta hastily marries Farfrae and deserts Henchard for ever.

The sudden change of weather which ruins Henchard's business, is but a bitter chance-happening. It is difficult to explain why Nature follows this way and not that. Henchard makes huge purchases, thinking that in future the weather would be unfavourable and the prices would go up, but how cruelly his wishes and dreams are shattered by the freakish ways of Nature. The weather changes for the better for no reason, bringing heavy losses to Henchard, and big profits to Farfrae, the former's sworn enemy in love and bitter rival in commerce.

Having been defeated in friendship, love and commerce, Henchard turns to bring solace and consolation to his weary and worn-out soul, in the affection of his daughter. He loves Elizabeth-Jane from the heart of his hearts and in her sweet society obliterates for the time being all his miseries

and misfortunes. But this too is not agreed by the Demon of Chance who one evening makes Henchard open the drawer and read Susan's letter containing a bitter disclosure of Elizabeth's identity. Poor Henchard is terribly shocked by the revelation that Elizabeth is not his daughter but Newson's and is naturally led to believe that this concatenation of events is the scheme of some sinister intelligence bent on punishing him. However, he does not lose heart and faces the shock as boldly as the situation can permit. He goes on loving Elizabeth as his own daughter, though he fails to experience the same joy and delight as he used to get before while ignorant of the truth. But the Demon of chance who seems to be still unsatisfied with his sufferings, directs one more blow, last and the deadliest. Newson returns as the embodiment of Fate and reclaims his daughter from Henchard. The return of Newson after twenty years is such an event as cannot be explained by any logic or argument. It is purely a chance-happening and it breaks the heart of Henchard totally. Henchard still tries to fight with his fate and tells a lie to Newson but that does not help him at all. What is fated cannot be abated. Broken and dejected, he leaves the town and suffers silently. Once again he returns and comes with a present to attend the wedding ceremony of his daughther, but again as chance would have it, he cannot meet her and has to go back in a state of unbearable agony, which ultimately puts an end to his life.

In this way, the story of "*The Mayor of Casterbridge*' abounds in ironic situations and unexpected events which give it an atmosphere of a soul stirring tragedy. From the beginning to the end of life; the hero is a victim of events and circumstances which are brought about by Chance or Fate.

Q. 6. *What do you understand by Irony of Fate? Illustrate your answer from* 'The Mayor of Casterbridge.'

Ans. Irony has been defined by the Concise Oxford Dictionary as "the expression of one's meaning by language of opposite or different tendency, especially simulated adoption of another's point of view for ridicule ; ill-timed or perverse arrival of event or circumstance in itself desirable, due

to the feigned good will and actual malice of Fate, circumstance, etc., use of language that has inner meaning for a privileged audience and an outer meaning for the person addressed or concerned." In literature irony is exploited as a technical device, for it serves as well as a figure of speech. Generally it is employed in the dramatic literature where it assumes two forms, one is the verbal irony and the other is the irony of situation or citcumstance. The former kind of irony is available in dialogues where it expresses a meaning of opposite kind. The speaker speaks in such a language that the listener takes another meaning, while the real meaning, is known only to the audience who are delighted by the criss-cross of meaning in the dialogue and the excitement of the scene. The second form of irony is that where the calculations of the ordinary mortals fail and the unexpected opposite happens making a mess of the whole situation. This very literary device has been remarkably employed by the novelists as well. The working of chance is the same thing as the irony of either circumstance or event or Fate.

Now the expression 'Irony of Fate' appears a little defective in so far as it tends to personify 'fate' and to introduce an emotional note into the way in which the underlying idea of this expression is to be understood. Human life does not always find adequate adjustment with the enviroment, and there is no necessary connection between the desert, desire and endeavour on the one hand, and reward, attainment and accompaniment on the other. They may coincide together, they may not, as the chance would have it. Thus irony may be good and conducive to some highly desirable result as it is in the case of Dogbery's watch, which saves, Hero, the innocent victim of scandal in *Much Ado About Nothing*, or it may be cruel as it is in the case of Romeo's ill-timed arrival at the tomb of Julliet. Unfortunately Hardy has emphasized only half the truth. He has dealt only with that cruel aspect of fate and presented what he calls "the impishness of circumstances.' Though he is 'a complete, and cold master of his material', yet in this respect, he seems to be taken off his feet. His passion for the irony of fate soon begins to boil up and the result is that event in his novels become more cruel than

they are in life itself. His world becomes ideally dark and gloomy. Duffin remarks that "in life it is the unexpected that happens, in the world of Hardy's novels it is the undesirable-unexpected". Hardy is so much possessed by this irony of fate that "his whole novel is built, primarily, upon the doctrine of the Irony of Fate, as commonly understood."

Sometimes it may appear that Hardy invents events without any purpose except to intensify the tragic note of his novels but these inventions are definitely not superficial. The coincidences are not only perfectly well-timed but also highly coherent and meaningful. In life we often dismiss them as 'mere chance events' with no significance, but Hardy, a true and accurate observer of the game of life, cannot miss them as superfluous or irrelevant. All his masterpieces illustrate the truth of this remark. *Tess* is a single example of the part played in human destiny by a capricious and malignant fate. Again in *Jude the Obscure*, the hero wishes that "somebody might have come along that way" and helped him. "But nobody did come, because nobody does" remarks Hardy. And it is this taste, this tone that pervades the whole of his wotk.

The above-mentioned conception of man's destiny on earth is clearly discernible in almost every novel of Hardy. In two novels—however, *Tess* and *Jude* the entire plot is made up of the bitterness of death. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *The Return of the Native* are equally pre-eminently bitter novels. It seems that the central purpose in them was to lay bare the mocking cruelty of life. They are regarded by Duffin as 'studies in the Irony of Fate.'

We now come to the irony of fate as it is illustrated in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. The novel in name and fact, is a story of a man of character. It is also a record of hopeless failure and defeat. These two things show the inconoclastic moral of the book. People think that man is the master of his destiny, he is the architect of his fate. The novel shows a man who is a symbol of surging, single and dominating character. Henchard is no hesitating Jude, no striken woman like Tess but a swift impetuous giant, a Samson shorn, an Achiles born, having tigerish energy and lionine move, yet he

goes down among the walls and arrows of circumstances. That he has character nobody can doubt; but character is only one of the circumstances in a man's environment. It is significant because unconsciously it modifies all other circumstances, and changes them so much so that sometime two persons having similar outward circumstances achieve altogether different results. It is in this sense that Hardy quotes Novalis in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* that 'Character is Fate.' Character does not determine destiny, although it modifies all other determining factors.

We see in the life of Henchard that the same character that make him the richest man of Casterbridge, when it acts upon certain circumstances brings about several facts which garduălly become the part of the hero's tragic destiny and cause his final fall and death. What are these facts? On the one hand some are connected with his drunken exploits at the Weydon Prior Fair, while on the other hand, some are connected with Lucetta. And besides these two kinds of facts, the impetuous affection of Henchard which makes him persuade, Farfrae, a young Scotchman, to stay in Casterbridge and become his manager has also much to do. This last fact is the most direct and persistent cause of the Mayor's downfall and tragedy. The real agony and irony of Henchard's life cannot be rendered by any one but Hardy. His slow crushing into lifelessness by the weight of leaden gloom and the recurrent batterings of failure is expounded in its consummated stage in the follwing paragraph, the cold bitterness of which may be paralleled a score of times from the latter chapter.

"And thus Henchard found himself again on the precise standing which he had occupied five and twenty years before. Externally there was nothing to hinder his making another start on the upward slope and by his new lights achieving higher things than his soul in its half-formed state had been able to accomplish. *But the ingenius machinery contrived by the gods for reducing human possibilities of amelioration to a minimum which arranges that wisdom to do shall come paripassu with the departure of zest for doing—stood in the way of all that.*"

Really, it is left for Elizabeth to expose the grim outlook

of the book. Remarks Hardy towards the close of the novel:

"......in being forced to class herself among the fortunate she did not cease to wonder at the persistence of the unforeseen when the one to whom such unbroken tranquillity had been accorded in the adult age was she whose youth had seemed to teach '*that happiness was but occasional episode in a general drama of pain*.'' Here is the suggestion of a gentler view, but the general view of the book is grey and desperate. Henchard as we have seen above is a victim of an ironical Fate right from the beginning up to the end of his life. He sells his wife and repents and tries later on to replace this loss by sweet companionship in other forms. His position in the town as Mayor does not satisfy him. Some spiritual want is felt by him. The urge for human society, the demand for friendship and love compel him to adopt a line which is ironically shattered. The void become larger and larger and the tragedy of loneliness becomes gradually intenser and intenser. He befriends Farfrae so much that they are inseparables for sometime. But how soon they become sworn enemies and bitter rivals! Then Henchard loves Elizabeth like his own daughter but she turns out to be Newsons's and not his. How tragic it is that the same evening he has persuaded her to call him her father, the stroke of irony comes upon his head. He opens the letter and is deeply wounded ! Even after he loves her but she is mad after Farfrae and no more cares for him. He goes to the wedding of Elizabeth out of pure parential love but is rebuked instead of being welcomed. It is an irony of the bitterest kind. Henchard, the father is so cruelly dealt with. Further, Henchard loved Lucetta who had come to the town for his sake also, but irony interfered and shattered all his hopes and dreams of happiness. Lucetta saw Farfrae, fell in love with him and hastily married him after the disclosure of Henchard's past life by the furmity woman—an event which is again an instance of bitter irony. Both Henchard, the father and Henchard, the lover are defeated by the irony of Fate, and if he thinks that he is in the grip of some sinister intelligence, bent upon ruining his happiness, he is not sentimental.

Susan intends to disclose the identity of Elizabeth but

only after the marriage of the latter. She does not want to disturb the peace and the joy of her husband by this unhappy disclosure. But death overtake her before her intentions are accomplished and her plans materialized. However, before dying she leaves the secret in an envelope but the undesirable unexpected' is too powerful to be resisted. The envelope is opened by Henchard before time and all hopes are shattered, giving rise to the tragedy of a magnitude.

Elizabeth too is a sorry victim of the irony of fate. As soon as she is ready to call Henchard her father and get her name changed and published in the Gazette of Casterbridge, Henchard knows the bitter truth and is no more ready to regard and love her as his own daughter. Further, she loves Farfrae sincerely and the latter expresses his passion for her in no less feverish terms. But the moment she accepts the service of Lucetta, her dreams are blighted. Farfrae goes to see her there but quite per chance meets Lucetta and falls in love with her. The tables are turned. Elizabeth is dismissed. Poor Jane is treated so cruelly by the Irony of Fate. It is only after long sufferings and mental tortures that she is married with Farfrae.

Then ultimately irony in the life of Lucetta is by no means insignificant. It is chance or irony that gives her Farfrae, wealth and power and, to crown all, an opportunity to shake hands with the Royality. But then irony becomes cruel. Lucetta fears Henchard and asks him to return her love-letters, and the good man, honestly enough, returns them. He gives those letters to Jopp who, in turn in a fit of intoxication and out of sheer jealousy for Lucetta whom he knew while she was at Jersey and who had not recommeded his case for employment at her husband's barn, opens the passionate bundle at the Peter Finger's Inn and reads them all out to an assembly of loafers. The result is disastrous. The satanic company decides to take out the skimmity-ride which takes place at a time, when Lucetta is at the apex of glory (since that very day she had the honour of receiving the Royal visitor in the capacity of the first woman of the town). How ironic it is indeed that all the efforts of Elizabeth to turn the gaze of Lucetta from the noise and light outside in the street fail. Lucetta

sees the ride and her effigy with that of Henchard. She is wounded and succumbs to the wound. She departs from the earth before the dawn approaches.

Thus every character and event in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is a unique illustration of the irony of Fate. It is fate which governs the course of the story and which determines the joys and sorrows of the various characters that figure in it.

Q. 7. *Give a brief description of manners, customs and superstitions of the Wessex peasants as seen in* The Mayor of Casterbridge.

Ans. Hardy has written in his notes and prefaces that though the name Wessex is applicable to the particular part of southern England which he is mainly concerned, with, it is more properly reserved for his own special artistic world—"the horizons and landscapes of a partly real, partly dream-country." The world, therefore, into which we step when we open the covers of his novels is a world more than ever difficult to find elsewhere in these times of railways, automobiles, mechanical reapers and binders, and trade unions of agricultural workers. Henchard, with his rule of-thumb and haphazard methods, competing with Farfrae who makes use of the modern methods of book-keeping and new mechanical devices, is the type of the old world confronting the new. And since the modern spirit, according to Hardy, is a shattering and careworn spirit, since those best enjoy life who know least about its ways, the simple rustics occupy an important place in his books. Apart from the principal figures, however, which he places in the foreground, he introduces a body of subordinates who are essential as parts of the picture—the peasants, among whom he spent most of his life, and whose psychology and behaviour, manners and customs, he delights to depict.

The peasants of Hardy as it is seen in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* lead a simple, unsophisticated life from the cares and snares of the modern complex society. They are a set of normal people, select,stoic, happy, ignorant, full of gossip, and easy in morals.. They are not infected by the abnormality of their better-placed brothers. They are wedded to the soil and toil. They are born, in simple rural

surroundings, grow up and fall in love and marry. Then they work hard, become old and go the way of all flesh peacefully.

The commonest forms of recreation among these peasants are music and dancing. They play on simple musical instruments in the west gallery of the church on Sundays, and perform on Christmas Eve for the benefit of residents for miles around. They indulge in both kinds of songs, religious and secular. The religion is that of the Church of England, the metrical versions of the psalms are used, and the carols are simple, graceful and old fashioned. Even more powerful than the appeal of the Church music is that of tunes for dancing. The dances are of the old country kind in the main jigs and reels performed in figures wherein the couples form a double row and work up to the top of the set. They take place in barns, cleared rooms or in the open air and any social event is made an excuse for them.

Next to singing and dancing, drinking, of course, occupies a large place among the activities of the Wessex peasants, and the inn serves as a club where they can gather for this purpose. Hardy often pictures them sitting round a room, drinking and giving voice to very profound remarks or retailing gossip. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* we have three inns the "Three Mariners", just below the "King's Arms", and lower still, "Peter's Finger" in the disreputable Mixen 'Lane quarter. At Weydon-Priors the taste for drink is ministered to by the old woman-seller of "furmity", a strange mixture of raisins and milk which she cunningly "laces" with rum. .

Apart from these prominent customs of the country, of which the last two (dancing and drinking) survive under different forms and conditions, there are others which have died out altogether, and some of which were peculiar to that part of southern England described by Hardy. Fairs and festivals occupy an important place in the social life of Wessex peasants. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* there are references to two fairs—the travelling show at Weydon-Priors, where Henchard sells his wife, and the yearly hiring fair that gives opportunity for a display of generosity by

Farfrae. Once indeed the arrangement of signalising a public festival by open-air sports is the cause of severy ridicule. When Henchard has caused the erection of grease poles, the provision of wheelbarrows and donkeys for racings all the show of a rural jollification, his usual ill-luck pursue, him and a rainy day drives, the public to the sheltered amusements of his rival, Farfrae.

The rustics are represented for the most part as being under the domination of old superstitions and orthodox beliefs. Their superstitions, however, are many and varied. They believe in witchcraft, ghosts, apparition and love charms. Henchard looks his effigy in the water, and regarding it as a bad omen, prevents himself from committing suicide. Prognostication is also indulged in. It is believed by Henchard (who has a strong superstitious strain) so implicitly that he regulates his commercial dealings on the basis of Conjuror Fall's weather-forecast, with disastrous results. In Casterbridge there are fortune-tellers, weather-forecasters and conjurors. They are the objects of a secret respect on the part of the natives who, pretending to discredit them, yet shamefacedly seek their advice.

Sometime these rustics take morbid pleasure in ridiculing their superiors. Enjoyment in others' discomfiture is repersented by the "skimmity-ride", a rough-and-ready method of holding up to ridicule any couple suspected of a breach of the moral law, by forming a procession headed by a donkey carrying effigies of the offenders. The skimmity-ride which causes the down-fall of Henchard and the death of Lucetta, is engineered by the rough element of Casterbridge, by good-for-nothing fellows.

The old-world character of this Wessex is the main agency which keeps these peasants so unsophisticated, and it is chiefly preserved by the lack of scientific means of transport and communication which keeps the people out of touch with the movements of modern thought. In Casterbridge goods are transported from one place to another by old-fashioned farm-carts and wagons. We have an interesting scene in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* where the wagons of Henchard and Farfrae collide and get stuck fast and the quarrel that ensues between the cart-men of the rival masters.

The peculiar temperaments of rustics is, of course, evolved partly out of their position as country folk in general and partly out of the impact of these various customs and conditions, which are for the most part, purely local and special. As a body they are ignorant full of gossip, addicted to drinking and not very strict in morals, but they are kind-hearted, frank, generous and slow to take offence. They are spcialists in their work, but they do at last learn to follow out their single line efficiently, taking a pride in doing one thing well instead of dividing their energies in half-doing several things. They are contented with their occupation and their economic status. Social discontent has not found its way among them to any great extent. In genral the landowners rule over the tenants with unquestioned sway, and there are few signs of any tendency to revolt against inequality. These are the people "to whom labour suggests nothing more than wrestle with gravitation and pleasure nothing better than a renunciation of the same."

These, then, are some of the customs and superstitions of Hardy's Wessex. They are closely interwoven with the life of the people, and would, in themselves, make the subject of a fascinating study. It is a unique achievement of Hardy that he has immortalized the common, obscure simpletons so picturesquely and passionately. He has given to them a sublimity and grandeur of character that only one, closest to life in its most elemental form, can truly impart. "The Wessex garden", as Grimsditch remaks, "is full of eternal flowers and fountains, where birds are chirping and merriment go between man and his partner most rhythmically and enchantingly."

Q. 8. "*In* 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' *we witness a battle between man and Destiny.*" - *Comment.*

Ans. Like dramas, the novels of Thomas Hardy turn on a conflict; but the conflict is not, as in most English novels and dramas, between one man and another, or between man and an institution. Surveying man in the light of his strong and sympathetic cast of mind, seeing him, not born in sin, but a being of immense aspirations towards good, Hardy has sought a reason why those aspirations so often come to nothing: and the answer to his questioning is that man is the

creature of circumstances, a pawn in the game played by destiny. Destiny subjects him to a number of external influences, the sum-total of which makes up his environment, and this plays a large part in the developement of his character. Hence tragedy in Hardy's novels arises, as Grimsditch writes, 'from the interplay of human emotions and the conflict between the aspirations of conscious man and the absolute law of unconscious fate.'

In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* we witness a spectacle of battle in which characters are ranged not against each other, but against impersonal forces, the forces, conditioning their fate. The grimness of tragedy is further intensified by the fact that these characters themselves are unaware of this. Henchard often thinks it is Farfrae who is ruining his happiness and he cries out against his erstwhile intimate friend, "He can rub brine on a green wound. But he shall pay for it, and he shall be sorry. It must come to a tussle—face to face; and then we will see how coxcomb can front a man." Similarly Lucetta thinks that is Henchard who is playing with her life, and instead of fearing her own fate fears him. Elizabeth also, to some extent, holds Henchard responsible for her miseries. But from the point of vantage from which Hardy surveys their stories, Henchard, Lucetta and Elizabeth are seen to be under a delusion. For those whom they think their enemies are as much as themselves puppets in the hand of Fate. Fate, not they, is ultimately responsibe for their quarrels. Unless they were destined to do so, they would not be in conflict with each other. Not that Hardy refuses to make moral distinctions between his characters. On the contrary, his leading figures divide themselves into instruments for good and instruments for evil. The line between them is determined by their attitude to themselves. All alike are striving for happiness; but whereas Lucetta strives with selfish passion, Henchard and Elizabeth are prepared to sacrifice their own happiness to ensure that of other people. This difference, however, in their characters does not affect the main issue. That is in the hands of Fate. And indeed it is significant that Hardy—as a rule—emphasizes the fact that even those characters the world would call wicked are so much the creatures of circumstance or victims of fate that they are

far more to be pitied than to be blamed. Henchard, for instance, seems on the face of it, faulty enough—violent, revengeful and uncontrolled. From that first chapter in which he sells his wife at the Fair, until the end of the story, when he deliberately conceals from Elizabeth-Jane the news of her father's arrival, lest she should wish to leave him, he acts in such a way as to justify the proposition that he himself is the architect of his misfortunes. But Hardy does not look him in this way. Henchard, as he sees him, is a pathetic figure born with an unfortunate disposition but genuinely longing to do right, tortured by remorse when he does wrong, and always defeated by some unlucky stroke of Fate.

Thus tragedy in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* rises to supreme heights of beauty and pathos, mainly on account of the fact that the hero of the story is pitted, not against another man, but aganist something outside himselef which is opposed to men of his ambition and power. It is significant to note that no human being deliberately wishes him ill. Even Farfrae and Newson and Elizabeth-Jane whom he has wronged all come to pity him, and even to admire his strength of character. He is standing up to Fate, and in backing the old Mayor whose ruin has been largely his own fault, Hardy makes us feel that we are backing human nature in an unequal contest. Hence there is no pessimism here. Throughout the book we are aware of the sublimity of this conflict and as such the failure of Henchard instead of depressing us only elevates and inspires us. So long there is the struggle with the decrees of fate and not with the laws of man, so long as it is in the open air and calls for activity of the body rather then of the brain (for Henchard is a man of action, not of thinking), there is greatness in the contest, there is pride and pleasure in it, and the death of the broken corn-merchant in his cottage on Egdon Heath is comparable to the death of Ajax, the lord of Salamis. The tragic emotion is ours, not of him who is engaged in the contest.

Q. 9. *"Hardy's great characters are greatest in their most tragic moments". (David Cecil). Examine this statement with special reference to the hero of* The Mayor of Casterbridge.

Or

"Among all the heroes in modern literature, Henchard comes nearest to Aristo.le's definition of the perfect tragic hero."—(W. R. Rutland) Discuss.

Or

"Henchard is Lear-like in his tragic grandeur." (Evellyn Hardy). Discuss.

Ans. Unlike those of the classical drama, the tragic heroes and heroines of Hardy belong to the low and humble classes of rural society. They are not kings, ministers, generals or warriors but farm-hands, woodlanders, shepherds, dairy-maids, furze-cutters, carriers, non-descript labourers, servants, cottagers. But the low position of Hardy's chief characters in no way deprives them of their grandeur and sublimity which belong to them as figures of an intensely tragic world. The perspective in which they are looked by their creator makes them as grand and imposing as any of the great tragic figures of Greek or Elizabethan drama. They are painted not as individuals but as symbols of mankind fighting against the forces of Destiny. We know them not in their individual relations to each other, but in their relations to time, death and fate. We do not see them in quick agitation against the lights and crowds of cities, we see them against the earth, the storm, and the seasons. We know their attitude towards some of the most tremendous problems that can confront mankind. They take on a more than mortal size in memory. We see them, not in detail but enlarged and dignified. They linger in our imagination, to use the words of David Cecil, 'as grand typical figures sillhouted (outlined) against the huge horizon of the universe.'

The most outstanding quality of Hardy's great tragic heroes on account of which they win our admiration and find a permanent dwelling in our memory is the quality of tremendous courage and endurance which they display during their struggle with opposite forces. The noblest nature which Hardly conceives in his charcters never gives way to cowardly shrinking or thoughtless abandon, but dimly realizing the seriousness of the conflict continues to struggle, and remains unbending under the hard blows of fate. The lesson

we learn from Hardy and the study of his tragic heroes and heroines is always that of clam endurance. As St. John Ervine says in his tribute to Hardy : "We have learned from you that the proud heart can subdue the hardest fate. In all that you have written you have shown the spirit of man persisting through defeat." It is on account of this very quality that Hardy's tragedies are seldom depressing. The rise and fall of his great heroes affect our being astoundingly and make us wiser and better. They evoke in us the same feelings of terror and pity that the great masterpieces of Greek drama awaken and which Aristotle regarded as the fundamental requisites of every great tragic art. During the moments of their pitched struggle with Destiny personified now as Nature then as Society, now as Chance then as Circumstance, the heroes of Hardy rise to great heights of poetic grandeur and magnificance. They live most vividly at the grand and desperate crises of their fortunes: Tess, forsaken by Angel: Marty, keeping her lonely watch over Giles's grave; Clym, gazing down at the dead wife who can never now hear his words of forgiveness; Mrs. Yeobright dying alone on the heath beneath the pitiless August sun ; above all, Henchard, sinking to death in complete despair in the ruined cottage on Egdon.

The last named hero of Hardy with whom we are mainly concerned in this essay has special claims on our attention as a tragic figure. Michael Henchard is a man of surging, single, dominating character - no complex, no hesitating Jude, no stricken woman, as Tess—but 'a swift impetuous giant going down among the walls and arrows of circumstances. He towers above the other leading characters in height and strength, and dominates the novel by the sheer force of presonality. His figure is drawn on the epic scale : he stands six foot and more, he has eyes that 'dig into men's souls', and he moves. 'Like a great tree in a wind'. He is a man of tremendous energy. Lion, tiger, tempest and volcano are the words which are used by Hardy to suggest the type of stuff he is made of. As Evelyn Hardy remarks, "like a wild bull roaming the hillside, triumphant in his prime, subdued and driven from the herd, he attracts us through his animal strength."

A man of strong passions and generous impulses, Henchard is above the common run of men. He has the strength

to make a vow and keep if for twenty years. He can fight with poverty and rise to fortune or to fame. What is more, he has a tremendous capacity to suffer without complaining. He is subjected to misfortunes, one severer than the other, but though his body is subdued, his soul remains unbent to the end. The weather changes and brings about a loss to his trade. Susan dies and he is deprived of his wife. The furmity-woman reveals his past and his moral reputation is gone. Lucetta goes away to Farfrae, and he is robbed of his love. Farfrae establishes independently and his busines is ruined. Elizabeth whom he loves as his true daughter forsakes him, and his paternal affection suffers a might loss. These calamities often lead him to feel that he is in the grip of some sinister intelligence bent upon ruining his happiness, but he always thinks it better to fight than to surrender. Undaunted by the blows of Fate and buffets of fortune and circumstances, he proclaims unto the end, "my punishment is not greater than I can bear." The odds that are placed against him are heavy and invincible but he grapples with them 'like a silent self-suffering Titan.' He shows tigerish energy and lionine speed. He is fierce in the grappling of perils and grand in the endurance of dooms. He seldom relates his sufferings to others, for he hates to be pitied or scorned. When others misunderstand him, his pride forbids him to explain his position. Misery has taught him nothing more than defiant endurance. It is significant to note that Henchard acts more than he speaks. As Mc Donall remarks, "He is not a man of words, and Hardy does not allow him many. Though near us he is never intimate ... it is a trait in Henchard to be rather unapproachable, and Hardy respects this," Really, Henchard is unapproachable in his tragic grandeur and we observe the spectacle of the rise and fall of his fortune with mixed feelings of awe and pity. In dignity and strength of his personality he is an Achilles, a Samson-shorn, a Prometheus unbound.

The character of Henchard rises to great heights of tragic beauty and pathos, specially owing to the fact that as a hero of the novel he is pitted, not against another man, but against something outside himself which is opposed to men of his ambition and power. No human being wishes him ill. Even Farfrae and Newson and Elizabeth-Jane whom he has

wronged all come to pity him, and even to admire his strength of character. He is standing up to Fate, and in backing the old Mayor whose ruin has been largely his own fault, Hardy makes us feel that we are backing human nature in an unequal contest. Hence there is no pessimism here. Throughout the book we are aware of the sublimity of the issue and the failure of Henchard instead of depressing us only elevates and ennobles us. Our baser feelings are purged and we are lifted to a much higher plane. So long there is the struggle with the decrees of fate and not with the laws of man, so long it is in the open air and calls for activity of the body rather than of the brain for Henchard is a man of action, not of thinking, there is greatness in the contest, there is pride and pleasure in it, and the death of the broken corn-merchant in his cottage on Egdon Heath is comparable, as Verginia Wolf observes, 'to the death of Ajax (a Greek tragic hero), lord of Salamis.'

However, Henchard is not a perfect character in the moral sense of the term. Like the heroes of Shakespeare he is the most complex and subtly drawn Hardy's male character, a man at war with himself, who, ignorant of his motives, works against and destroys himself—a smouldering, volcanic fellow whose pattern is to cheat himself of success, companionship, happiness, love, to castigate and brand himself until he dies as an outcast. He is a confusing mixture of good and evil. Hardy himself during the course of the novel describes him "as Faust, as a vehement gloomy being, who had quitted the ways of vulgar men, without light to guide him on a better way." He is cruel, jealous, possessive, suspicious, vain, proud, dishonest, prejudiced and rigid, but with these negative qualities in him are blended also courage, generosity, forthrightness, patches of honesty, a sense of justice, a massive fortitude 'which disdains suffering and, like Atlas bears all.' In the moments of heated passions and impulsive vehemance he commits serious blunders, but when the heat is gone, he is cool and repentant, making mightly amends and facing the consequences of his deeds with god-like courage and endurance. He commits sins but commits them in a grand manner. His sins are the expressions of an overmastering passion, not the calculated

consequences of selfish lust. Moreover, he knows he is wrong—he is torn with conscience. In a fit of passion added by the fumes of liqour, he sells his wife and daughter, but after the deed is over he makes a heroic repentance and takes a vow in the church not to drink wine. For twenty years he denies himself the pleasure of drinking and drinks nothing but water. It is magnificent repentance and a heroic penance which only a man like Henchard can make and fulfil it. He wrestles with Farfrae but to equalize his strength with his rival's he fastens his arm to a nail in the wall and when the enemy is completely at his mercy, he spares him.

"Your life is in my hands" says Henchard when he has overpowered Farfrae, and when Farfrae says. "Then take it; you have wished so long enongh," Henchard's reply to this is characteristic of his heroic soul. Henchard says:

'O, Farfrae, that's not true ! God is my witness that no man ever loved another as I did thee at one time. And now—though I come here to kill thee, I cannot hurt thee. Go and give me in charge—do what you will—I care nothing for what comes of me."

Similar heroic grandeur is shown by Henchard in his behaviour towards Lucetta. He has this faithless coquette completely in his hand should he so desire he can blast her happiness to pieces but, no, it would be unchivalrous to fight with one of the weaker sex and he dismisses her as 'too small a deer to hunt.' He even forgives her and returns her letters. Moreover when he learns that she is fatally ill and Farfrae is not at home where his presence is urgently needed he rushes out in search of Farfrae, forgetting that he had intended to kill him only four hours earlier, but alas, Farfrae would not believe his words.

"Believe me, Farfrae: she is in danger. I know no more, and they want you to come. Your man has gone the other way in a mistake. O Farfrae! don't mistrust me - I am a wretched man ; but my heart is true to you still."

These words of Henchard bespeak the pathos of his soul in a manner which is hard to find elsewhere. They have a

note of tragic intensity which stirs the deepest chord of our emotional being.

Henchard appears to us as a great tragic figure when he goes to meet Elizabeth for the last time on the day of her wedding ceremony, and on being coldly treated, does not make any appeal or argument for self-defence, but caring more for the distress of the girl on account of his presence in her house, says :

"Don't ye distress yourself on my acconnt. I would not wish it – at such a time, too, as this. I have done wrong in coming to thee—I see my error. But it is only for once, so forgive it, I'll never trouble thee again, Elizabeth-Jane—no, not to my dying day! Good-night, Good-bye!"

This is the greatest crisis in Henchard's fortune and he returns from the spot, all broken and dejected, wishing nothing but to be sent to his final resting place, unwept, unhonoured and unsung. The words of his will, which we all know, are perfectly in tune with his great character and they convey to us the some emotion as the words uttered by Macbeth at the time of his final fall.

> "Out, out, brief candle !
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his our hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more ; it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing."

Q. 10. *Give a critical estimate of* The Mayor of Casterbridge *and define its position among the Wessex novels.*

Or

Describe and illustrate the qualities which justify the high position given by some critics to The Mayor of Casterbridge.

Ans : Thomas Hardy is known particularly for his fourteen novels, and among these *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *Jude the Obscure*, *The Woodlanders* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, are regarded by common consent as his undying

masterpieces. Not only from the point of view of the philosophy of the author, but also from the standpoint of art and technique, these novels are found to be stainless and flawless. Everything that goes to make a successful novel is found in these novels to a marked degree. Plot construction, character portrayal, dialogue, setting, dramatic situations, and above all style and manner of expression, all are of a very high order. There are no odd angularities and every novel stands as a perfect organic whole. All of them quite faithfully represent the 'regional' life, the life of a particular locality known as Wessex, without losing the universality of their appeal. Despite their local or regional character, the ultimate impression created by them on the reader's mind is not that of a limited compass, but of the general human life.

It has been truly remarked, that in many of Hardy's novels a locality is so clearly and visibly portrayed that it acquires, as it were, a personality. It seems that it almost plays the part of a human being in the story and acts and reacts on main the action of story. In *Far From the Madding Crowd*, it is the rich pastoral country of the sheep farms; in *The Woodlanders*, it is the wooded country of timber plantation and cider orchards; *The Return of the Native* has the sombre and majestic Egdon Heath. Similarly *The Mayor of Casterbridge* has also a locality and it is the old country town of Dorchester thinly disguised under one of those ingenious fictitious names that Hardy invented for Wessex localities. It is no exaggeration to say that even Egdon Heath in *The Return of the Native* is not more powerfully and brilliantly conceived than the old Wessex capital with its Roman antiquities, its market-places, its inns, its 'grizzled church,' its High Street with its timber houses, its old gardens full of "bloody warriors", and snapdragons, its disreputable Mixen Lane, its two bridges towards which "gravitated all the failures of the town", its ancient constables, and its corporation and mayors, that elective dynasty that dated back to the reign of Charles I. There is hardly any novel in English other than *The Mayor of Casterbridge* which gives us so completely the sense of living in an imagined locality. Hardy's picture of Casterbridge is a picture of the real town; yet genius has touched it with immortality, and

transformed it into a town of the spirit like Homer's Troy and Scott's Edinburgh. And against this background is played out one of the most moving and admirably constructed tragic tales that Hardy ever wrote.

Lascelles Abercrombie has divided Hardy's major novels into dramas and epics. In the four dramatic novels, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *and The Woodlanders*, he finds the pivot of interest resting on the interaction of a number of different characters, a kind of complex pattern woven out of a number of different lives. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, the pattern is said to be of the epic type because it is concerned in the main with the unfolding of the tragic history of a single life. In the dramatic novels, the author generally keeps in the background and rarely addresses the reader. If he at all addresses, he does so for the purpose of description and elucidation of character. In the epic novels, on the contrary, he assumes the role not merely of a narrator, but also that of a philosophic commentator. That is why in *Tess* and '*Jude* which are called epic novels, Hardy not only shows the disasters that overtake Tess and Jude, but he himself becomes the spokesman of modern spirit, and arraigns the cruelty of society that he holds responsible for these disasters. In the light of this classification of Hardy's novels, we can say that *The Mayor of Casterbridge* certainly belongs to the dramatic group. The reason is that it shows us a tragic drama woven out of six main strands, the lives of Michael Henchard, Susan Henchard, Elizabeth-Jane, Richard Newson, Donald Farfrae and Lucetta Templemen. It is a drama as skilfully built and as organically complete as anything written for the Greek or the Elizabethan stage. It seems to move forward with an inevitable and relentless power from Henchard's reckless sale of his wife in the opening scene to his spectacular rise to the pinnacle of the Mayoralty, the nemesis that overtakes him and his piteous death in the end. The novel does not remain a drama alone. As Abercrombie has truly pointed out, if it is a drama, it is a drama that approaches the epic type. It differs from the two other great dramatic novels of Hardy on the ground that one character is

of such monumental power and compelling force that he completely dominates the rest, and assumes a position almost comparable to that of the central figure of either *Tess* or *Jude*. Besides, the author rarely obtrudes in the middle of the story with his personal philosophic comments as he mostly does in *Tess* and *Jude* though, as Abercrombie remarks, we constantly feel that he is on the point of doing so, and once at least, in his comment on Henchard's bitter reflections, he oversteps the dramatic boundary and speaks in his own person of 'Nature's contrarious inconsistencies' and of her, jaunty readiness to support unorthodox social principles.' Generally he uses a method of comment that is far more satisfactory in a dramatic work. It is that of the chorus composed, not as it is in Greek tragedy of elders or maidens dancing to a rhythmic measure, but of the Casterbridge gossips. The minor characters in the novel described as the 'philosophic party' symbolize the commonplace world, and their talks and gossips like the songs of the Greek chorus, give us comments on the tragic spactacle from the view point of average humanity.

Hardy is a recognized master of the art of characterization. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* he has shown great skill and insight in painting the character of 'a vehement gloomy being who has quitted the ways of vulgar men without any light to guide him on a better way'. Henchard has neither the moral nobility of Gabriel Oak nor the intellectual force of Jude. He compels our admiration chiefly on account of the tremendous energy of his will which is ready to be used as much for good purposes as for the evil ones. In spite of his folly and stubbornness we cannot help praising him for his courage and innate sense of justice. Even when he has Farfrae, his enemy at his mercy, he gives him a fair fight. Even when he can ruin Lucetta and destroy her husband's happiness, he scorns to revenge himself on a woman and returns her letters. He shows a kind of dumb helplessness in his misfortunes that is really pathetic in a man of power and energy like him. As Lionel Johnson remarks he "is like a child in his simplicity, like a hurt animal. He seems to feel the fatality of his own act and makes no complaint; he has no vast self-pity. Misery taught him nothing more

than a defiant endurance of it". He fulfils perfectly Aristotle's definition of the tragic hero; "a man not eminently good or just, yet whose misfortune is brought about by vice, by some error or frailty". He is the greatest masculine chararcter in Hardy's novels.

Hardy says in the preface of the novel that some Scotchmen objected to the character-sketch of Farfrae. But the explanation offered by him in this respect is acceptible. To English readers Farfrae seems to be an admirable portrait of a Scot with his quickness and vivacity and his combination of romance and business-like acumen, which form a striking contrast to Henchard's slow, ponderous, instinctive strength. Then Susan Henchard, the home-spun woman, can hardly be said to have a character at all. She is the embodiment of passive suffering. Again Lucetta is a sketch of a flighty, attractive, and rather pathetic woman of fashion, who occurs several time in Hardy's novels. She may be compared with Mrs. Charmond in *The Woodlander's*. But Elizabeth-Jane is the finest picture among the women characters of this story. Thomas Hardy has seldom painted a woman with such tenderness as that which he has bestowed on this child of Nature. She recalls Gabriel Oak in her steadfast honesty of purpose, and Jude in her ambition to acquire knowledge. She forms a kind of centre of stability in the novel like Horatio in *Hamlet* or like Kent in *King Lear*, to remind us that, inspite of human passion and tragic storms, the most ancient heavens are fresh and strong and the eternal varities shall prevail. Her last words after the revelation of Henchard's terrible testament, express a depth of emotion in simple prose as admirably as any Greek or Elizabethan dramatist could have expressed it in verse : "O Donald... ... what bitterness lies there. O I would not have minded so much if it had not been for my unkindness at that last parting.........But there is no altering—so it must be". It is befitting that the short account of her tranquil married life should end the tragedy on that note of calm and happiness which is but an 'occasional episode in a general drama of pain',—a note with which the Greeks closed their tragic dramas.

Hardy is the only writer of genius, who has after

Shakespeare given a truly, rustic English humour. All his greatest tragedies are inserted with such thrilling and entertaining scenes as are characterized by pleasant humorous touches of the simplest possible kind. It was Hardy who with the depth of his insight recognized that out of the coarse homely soil a king of poetry could grow, and it is significant to note that one of the most beautiful and touching passages in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is Mother Cuxsom's elegy on poor Mrs. Henchard : "With, poor soul, she's powerless to hinder that or anything now.........And all her shining keys will be taken from her, and her cupboards opened, and little things did't wish seen, anybody will see, and her wishes and ways will all be as nothing!" It is a philosophic comment containing a peculiar mixture of pathos and humour, gravity and gaiety. Coney says to Mother Cuxsom when Susan is married the second time, that "she also had a chance at this advance age." Such ironical humour is found at many places in the novel It is the 'philosophic party' that besides performing its function of comment and criticism, provides humour, a kind of humour which is regarded by Duffin as 'a brilliant study in the irony of fate.'

Landscape and nature are as beautifully painted in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* as in any of the greatest novels of the Wessex series. Mention has already been made of the local colour and the brilliant description of the countryside life of Casterbridge. Here it is enough to note Nature plays the same part in this novel as it plays in other novels. It shapes character and directs and determines human destiny. Moreover, the description of natural scenes and events is by no means inferior to that of those that appear in other novels. We have the harvest autumn scene when the townfolk go out into the field and work there with their country brethren, forgetting all the distinctions of culture and refinement. Then there is the village fair with its conspicuous tent, and curious gipsy tradesmen with their dogs of all kinds and the shops of all sorts where hearty hospitality is exhibited. Scenes of weather are equally charming. Rain and storm are described with the same minute detail as they are painted in *Far From the Madding Crowd.*

From the point of view of art and style of which Hardy

was so great a master, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* can safely be pointed out as a model of perfection. There are passages of supereme beauty, both in the form of comments by the author and in the course of dialogues between the major as well as minor characters. In addition to the philosophic, cold and sombre style whose handling was almost instinctive with Hardy, there are occasional purple patches in the narration and speeches. There are similes which are wonderfully remarkable for their aptness and poetic flavour. There are sentences, which contain as many as three similes, as for example, the commentory sentence on Henchard's lack of accuarte observation of the motions and movements of Lucetta toward Farfrae. These similes are often picturesque without being artificially gorgeous or decorative. Hardy's style is highly allusive sometimes. These allusions bear on all sources, namely ancient, pagan, Biblical and modern literatures. Another marked charcteristic of Hardy's style is that the speeches of the rustics are also poetic. A sentence like this, 'why should death rob life of four pence' is highly suggestive and striking. Often a single phrase expresses the personality of the character, as for example, Henchard was "Samson shorn." The picture is raised and the man stands before our eyes.

So far as the language or diction of the novel is concerned it is simple, clear, lucid and admirably appropriate for the matter in hand. No doubt there is an abundance of scientific terms but they are never offensive. A spade has got to be called a spade. Names of machines and tools cannot be simplified. True, there was a charge of Scotticism against the language of Farfrae in this novel but this charge has been admirably met by the novelist himself in the preface. The dialect of the North could not be better written and presented than as understood by the Southerners. Farfrae spoke in his native Scottish language, but his pronunciation was understood by Southern listeners in a way as shown in the novel. Besides, there cannot be any dispute about the language spoken by the members of the 'philosophic party'. They must speak in their rural dialect as their brethren do in other mighty novels of Hardy. Hardy always took a keen delight in the rural dialects of his Wessex country, for he

thought that modernization tended to spoil the nature, rhythm and picturesqueness of English language.

Now a word about the tragic spirit and atmosphere of the novel. Like Hardy's other five masterpieces, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is a supreme example of tragic art. Apart from the tragedies of individual lives, the theme of this novel is founded on the tragic consequences of the impact of 'new and strange spirit' on the lives of Casterbridge men and women. This impact is seen in the intrusion of Farfrae's modern business methods into the old sleepy world of Casterbridge. But much more subtle and far reaching effects are shown as born of the relations between the old-fashioned, simple-minded Casterbridge folk and the more complex characters of modern civilization. We have in this novel two such persons as are the perfect symbols of modern civilization. They are Farfrae and Lucetta who come to the town from afar and create a flutter among the unsophisticated and straightforward Casterbridge folk, especially in the lives of Henchard and Elizabeth-Jane, leading to intensely tragic consequences.

Not only this, Henchard's life is shipwrecked as much the 'Devil of Society' as by the invisible forces of some mysterious Fate. His doom is brought about by 'the governing power of the universe' which is impersonal, unkowing of his strivings, and unfeeling towards his sufferings. But, despite all the suffering to which he is subjected, the purity of his character and the nobility of his spirit are never lost. The novel shows how the children of humanity can resist the blows of Destiny by the spirtual force of their character. It is this power of enduring the cruel attacks of Fate with 'courage never to submit or yield' that raises the character of the hero as well as the novel in which he figures to the highest level. Like the tragic dramas of Sophocles and Shakespeare, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* creates no mood of disgust or depression. It ends in the production of that state which Milton described as 'the calm of mind, all passion spent.'

Thus we may conclude by saying that *The Mayor of Casterbridge* from every point of view belongs to the class of Hardy's greatest novels and in cartain respects rises even higher than the highest amongst them.

CHAPTER XXVI

3. CHARACTER SKETCHES

MICHAEL HENCHARD

Introduction. The chief character, or the hero of the novel *The Mayor of Casterbidge* is Henchard, from whom the book derives its title. It is very significant to note that despite other characters in the novel, Henchard is the only person who captivates and impresses the reader most. The novel is Henchard and Henchard is the novel. Right from the first page to the last, it is his life—his actions and their consequent reactions that the novel depicts. Others simply fill up the blanks, and they can easily be called the various expressions of the hero's gigantic personality. Critics have called this novel an epic and rightly so. It is one man's tale, it is the history of his rise and fall. Hardy himself makes this point clear by writing in the preface to this novel: "The story is more particularly a study of one man's deeds and character than, perhaps, any other of those included in my Exhibition of Wessex life."

His vehemence : The first important quality to be noted in the character of Henchard is impulsiveness or emotional vehemence. He has a turbulent nature. His habits are passionate and given freely to mighty gusts. Whenever he carries his point a blaze of satisfaction is emitted. The satisfaction beamed forth by his face, when Farfrae agrees to stay with him, is fierce in strength. His emotions and impulses know no restraint. His affection is tigerish. His manner of speaking is lionine. On coming to know that the young stripling is going to establish in the same town independently his anger flares up, and 'his voice might have been heard as far as the town-pump expressing his feelings to his fellow councilmen.' His whole being is made up of some unruly volcanic stuff. His gaze is strong and warm like the sun beside the moon in comparison with Farfrae's modest

look. Whenever he looks into the faces of men, he digs his strong eyes into them and they begin to blink. Probably power had computed the man otherwise he would not have lost all his inner strength after the revelation of his shameful past and be ashamed to look the public in the face.

The quality of vehemence in Henchard expresses itself in more than one way. He is tempetuous both in his likes and dislikes. He declares to Farfrae, "when a man takes my fancy, he takes it strong." And he is really honest in his profession for he see that he constantly desires to have the young man near him to become his inseparable part. While walking he 'would lay his arm familiarly on the manager's shoulder, as if Farfrae was a younger brother, bearing so heavily that his slight figure bent under his weight." His laughter, which is very rare, is loud, long and boisterous—'a perfect cannonade of laughter.' Soon Henchard's friendship with Farfrae turns into enmity, dark and poisonous. And in his hatred Henchard is so very passionate that he thinks of killing the Scotchman. Really he is 'a man to whom some human object for pouring out his heat upon, whether emotive or choleric is almost a necessary.' We should never forget that it was his stupendous energy that made him Mayor; and again it was this trait that was responsible for keeping him from beggary and despair in times of privation and great mental affictions.

His impulsiveness : Another quality closely connected with vehemence in Henchard's character is impulsiveness. It exists in him because of his unrestrained and excessive energy. More than often it is impulsiveness that makes him vehement. The novelist himself has declared him to be a man of strong impulses. His goodness is of a very fitful cast. It is an occasional, almost an oppressive generosity rather than a mild and constant kindness. Henchard suffers greatly only because of this impulsiveness. A man of volcanic energy cannot but commit great errors when impulses are so strong in him. We see his foolish actions, hastily performed and long regretted. He does almost every thing on the impulse of the moment regardless of consequences. It is in a thoughtless and impulsive state of mind that he sells his wife. While appointing Farfrae, he sticks out for no terms. The appoint-

ment is impulsive. So also the dismissal. His insensate jealousy blinds him; he does nothing but dismiss Farfrae only to regret later on the rashness of his action. His lie to Newson is the lie of a child in pure mockery of consequences. After reading out the letters to Farfrae to whose house he goes to take revenge on the married pair, he does not stick to his intention. The reason is that both the beginning and the end of the programme are implusive and momentary. Cold blooded act is beyond him—'his quality being such he could have killed them both in the heat of action, but to accomplish the deed by oral poison was beyond the nerve of his enmity.' The only redeeming feature of his impulsiveness is that, for good or evil, he does nothing stealthily.

It is very strange that Henchard is denaturalized by the love of his own daughter. His spirits are broken. He is no longer the Henchard of former days: he is like a Samson shorn, a fangless lion. It is only after this change that we find him considering and weighing for hours together the meaning of a deed or a thought.

His gloominess: The whole character of Henchard is marked with a note of gloominess. It is present even in his features for he is 'warthy, and stern in aspect.' He keeps beard which he handles in his moments of worry. This beard deepens the impression of gloominess received from his swarthy complexion. His 'dark bushy brows' and 'flashing eyes' make his grimness more intense. He laughs rarely and when he does his laughter is not encouraging. His gaze is ambiguous and hard to understand. Even at the age of twenty when people are often cheerful, he is gloomy, taciturn and reserve. He does not speak to his wife while going along the road. He feels that his early marriage is the cause of his ruin. He drinks in order to drown his gloomy feelings. Christopher Coney calls Henchard 'a lonely widow man.' On account of his lonely life he suffers from gloomy fits 'when the world seems to him to have the blackness of hell' and he feels that 'like Job, he could curse the day that gave him birth.' Even prosperity cannot dispel the shades of gloom in his life. Towards the end, it is 'the leaden gloom of one who has lost all that can make life interesting or even tolerable.' His will shows the stuff his whole life was made of.

His faith in superstition : Superstition is a never failing friend of gloominess. This aspect of his character is partly temperamental, and partly imbibed from society. The novelist has called him a 'man of moods, glooms and superstitions.' He visits the weather prophet to know the future state of the weather and the coming harvest, and wrecks his fortune for the forecast of the prophet turns out to be wrong. Sometimes he thinks that somebody has been roasting a waxen image of him or stirring an unholy brew to confound him. And Hardy holds that these superstitions come to him during the hours of moody depression, when all the practical largeness of his view has gone out him. He thinks that the presence of the effigy is an intervention of some mysterious invisible power. He often feels that he is in Somebody's hands. When he learns that Elizabeth is not his daughter, he thinks that this discomfiture is due to the agency of some fiendish being, and looks out at the night as at a fiend. Rightly does Hardy remark, "Henchard like all his kind, was superstitious, and he could not help thinking that the concatenation of events this evening had produced was the scheme of some sinister intelligence bent on punishing him, yet they had developed naturally."

However, one great redeeming feature of Henchard's character is that he takes the favours and buffets of fortune very becomingly and heroically. Like all the country folk he believes in the irony of fate and accepts his misfortunes as inevitable. Says he, 'I am to suffer, I perceive.' Gloominess makes him grave and serene—it is the shadow expressive of his inner conviction that the scheme of the world is ruled by some relentless fate, that human life is more a tragedy than a comedy.

His courage and endurance : Henchard, though an ordinary hay-trusser, is 'a grand and imposing figure.' He is a man of somewhat pagan severity, grand in the endurance of dooms, a thundering Thor, a defiant Prometheus, believing in some 'Sinister Intelligence', bent upon ruining him, and defying it to do its worst, and uttering with an unconscious knowledge of his own greatness, 'my punishment is not greater than I can bear'. He is a Samson fighting with the giant of circumstances', 'the concatenation of events'.

However the outward war is nothing ; there is still a greater war within him. He is a compound of the dark and the fair, of good and evil—a god and a beast in one. Grimsditch is of opinion that "His nature is a mixture of strength and weakness ; in him powerful opposite forces wage war. Sullen obstinacy strives with open-heartedness, envious spite with good nature, meanness with generosity ; license with restraint."

His habit of drinking : Drink is a tormenting demon with Henchard. When it possesses him, he loses all concious reason and common sense. In the state of intoxication he goes to the extent of making a public auction of his wife. Later on he regrets the deed and takes the vow not to drink liquor any more, but, we can easily imagine the temptation coming over him, as he tells Farfrae, 'I have kept my oath ; and though Farfrae, I am sometimes so dry in the dog days that I could drink quarter barrel to the pitching, I think o' my oath, and touch no strong drink at all." He drinks again when he has ceased to care for himself and has lost all interest in life and is in the grip of his moodiness. The moment he is free from moodiness he regrets that life is something to live for the love of Elizabeth—the emotional void that had been created in him is filled up and he again avoids drink.'

His pride : Henchard is given to pride and a little of haughtiness. It is pride which drives away Elizabeth-Jane from him. His haughty spirit cannot appreciate the simple thrifty deed of Jane—her serving at The Three Mariners—to get a part of accommodation. He thinks it to be little less than a social degeneration. He cares much for public opinion and social conventions. He cannot excuse the faulty and dialectical language of Jane. He thinks that low birth and breeding are the cause of this fault. But one thing is so very good, he takes back Susan only because of his pride. He thinks that by having Susan back he would be able to save his shady and disgraceful life as a young man, from public exposure. Ambitious he becomes or he really is because of pride. He cannot play the second fiddle. In fact, it is this quality that helps him in his rise to the position of Mayor. He bears misfortune and scorns pity. He is too proud to

own defeat. He is 'an old hand at bearing anguish in silence and haughty withal'. But how redeeming and ennobling it is that for the sake of his daughter, he should throw off all his pride and agree to become a seed-merchant. On her account pride itself wears the garment of humility.

His concientiousness : It is the virtue of conscientiousness that raises Henchard above the level of the vulgar. He means to defeat Farfrae in business, but by or honest means as he says to Jopp. Then he means to kill Farfrae but by a fair fight and to equalize the chances he pinions his left arm and fights only with the right. When he has him at his mercy, he lets him go. He prefers Susan to Lucetta, though Cupid points the other course. In fact, he schools himself into a course of strict mechanical rightness towards this woman of prior claim at any expense to the latter one and his own sentiments. It is very honest of him that he sends to Susan the sum of five pounds and five shillings which he had received from Newson as her price. The Commissioner praises his honesty and fair dealings in his accounts and he offers his watch and purse and when the former article is refused, he sells it and gives the money to one of his small customers. The unique expression of this divine moral courage and truth is found in his acceptance of the revelation by the furmity woman. He would have denied and people would have taken him at his words. But no, it would not have been Henchardian but rougish and cowardly. He lost Lucetta by his truth, lost social prestige by it, but he did not lose himself. He does not reveal the past of Lucetta, though the temptation is great. He considers Lucetta a very small deer to hunt. He is forgiving and generous-hearted.

His fitfulness : But his generosity is fitful. He lies to Newson. He lapses again into drunkenness. His firmness of will often becomes obstinacy and wrong-headedness. Pride makes him slave to convention. Indifference to Fortune becomes sullenness and gloominess. Why all this ? Obviously because he has no light to guide him on a better way. True religion he has soon his belifes are fetishistic. Instead of philosophy he has cynicism. He has no trust, he has no principles. And for want of faith, or light, or

philosophy or principle, all his virtues come to naught. And herein lies the bitter tragedy of his life.

Conclusion : In the words of Duffin Henchard is "swift-striding, unfettered giant of impulse, yet with sublime power of self control ; fierce but sinless ; most magnificent of Hardy's men." Angel Clare and Giles Winterborne are higher in the scale of being, but for sheer grandeur and richness of personality he is unequalled. He is eminently lovable. One may forget any other male character of Hardy but not Michael Henchard who is, as David Cecil rightly thinks 'an epic hero.'

DONALD FARFRAE

Introduction : Donald Farfrae, the young Scotchman enters the story at a time when the action has made a considerable progress. One major event of the story has already taken place and the poor drunkard hay-trusser has become a prosperous trader, the Mayor of Casterbridge, and the church-warden. But Farfrae's entry in the novel changes the course of the story. He enters into the service of Henchard and upsets the balance. He, indeed, creates a flutter in the town, in business, in society, in women and above all in the 'philosophic party'. He steals the heart of Jane, wins Lucetta and takes possession of the trade of the town. Ultimately he becomes Mayor of Casterbridge, and shakes hands with the Royal Personage. Quite luckily after the death of Lucetta, he has Elizabeth-Jane, 'the Flower of Nature', as his wife, and after the death of Henchard leads a happy and peaceful life.

As Hardy intends, Farfrae's character is the reverse of Henchard's. He is supposed to be the evil genius of Henchard. Let us discuss his character under the following heads :

His person : This young Scottish adventurer is slim and slight in build, fair in complexion, bright-eyed, and a man of remarkably pleasant aspect. These traits help him in winning the heart of the townfolk. Even Henchard the grimlooking and frowning gentleman is not left by him unaffected. Naturally enough, he is a godsent for the fair women who are easily ready to worship him. He attracts Elizabeth Jane by the charms of his personality and makes

Lucetta such a slave of his almost at first sight, that she altogether forgets Henchard for whose sake she had come to the town overboard.

His manners: Besides, being a winning and captivating personality, Farfrae has very charming manners. His manners are his great assets and soon we see that the town is full of him. He knows the art of winning the sympathy of his superiors, the love of his equals and regard of his inferiors. He knows more accurately than any one the art of winning the flaming as well as the sleeping hearts. Music and dance are his great attainments. It is in fact his musical performance which won for him the heart of those present at The Three Mariners. Elizbeth was immediately taken captive by the songs he sang there. Even the prosaic people were much affected by his music. Lucetta often enjoyed the music of this young Scottish charmer. It was his music and dance in the shady groves that drew the people of Casterbridge on a rainy day. The perfect dance of Farfrae is displayed on the occasion of his marriage with Elizabeth.

His modernity: While Michael Henchard is a man of old type and fashion, a man of rule-of-thumb and haphazard methods, Farfrae is a modern man, he knows the lattest methods of renovating bad corn, he keeps account books, applies mathematics and mensuration to measure corn, and introduces the newly-invented sowing machine which creates a great stir in the town. Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane come out of their dwelling to look at this strange phenomenon in their town. It is through his scientfic method that he increases the prosperity of Henchard. And when he leaves him, his business goes down so deplorably that it never improves. But himself he makes no delay in settling in the same business. He soon prospers by virtue of his prudence and practical mindedness. He is contended with small profits while repeated many times, these small profits, enable him to build up a great heap of gold so very soon. His sound intelligence helps him to think of the right thing at the right time. In business as well as in love he is a grand success. He becomes rich, marries Lucetta, becomes Mayor, shakes hands with royalty and soon after the death of Lucetta

marries Elizabeth, And he does all this by virtue of his intelligent modernity.

The two threads of his life : The character of Donald Farfrae is composed of two threads, one is the commercial and the other is romantic. At times they are quite distinct. His loves of ditties and ballads, reels and flings, is expressive of his romantic and imaginative nature. So also his manner of singing in praise of his homeland. But admirably enough, he keeps this thread under the control of his other thread. Really it is the Commercial Farfrae, who is more powerful than the Romantic Farfrae. He loves his country and sings about it but that does not prevent him from leaving it. Christopher Coney asks quite sarcastically : "why did ye come away from yer own country for, young master, if ye be so wounded about it ?" Coney makes the question intenser further, by saying, "Be dazed if I loved my country half as well as young feller do, I'd lived by claning my neighbours pigestes afore I'd go away!,' And answers Farfrae in his own way, "But I said to myself, 'Never a one of the prizes of life will I come by unless I undertake it ! ' and I decided to go." But the simple people are misled by his songs. Really he sings so freely that they suppose he must be intensely lovnig his own country. But Coney, the cynic is not deceived by it. However Elizabeth is so much misled that she asks him, when she meets him alone in the barn, "You are anxious to get back to Scotland, I suppose, Mr. Farfrae?" The surprised youngman clears the doubt, "Oh no Miss Newson, why would I be?" His answer given below shows plainly that his love of his country is merely sentimental and not something deep in his heart.

"It's well you feel a song, for a few minutes, and your eyes get quite tearful ; but you finish it, and for all you felt you don't mind it or think of it again for a long while. Oh, no I don't want to go back. Yet I'll sing the song to you with pleasure whenever you like, I could sing it now, and not mind at all."

In Farfre sentiment is controlled by intellect. He has in him more of intellect than of emotion, more of commerce than of romance. He has always a sure eye on the profit. Only in the company of fair Lucetta for the first time, senti-

ment gains the upper hand. He forgets his business appointment but only for a short time. Soon we hear that Farfrae does not talk love but talks shop. He talks about business and explains his commercial success. However, the charm of the fair woman makes him wish there were no business in the world, a very surprising wish indeed. And humorously enough Lucetta points out his inconsistency and he confesses his weakness in these words : "It is only since coming here, and seeing you !" And soon the commercial mood becomes the master and we instantly find him into the market.

Farfrae is through and through a practical-minded businessman. He reduces the wages of his workmen by one shilling a week. One of the temptations for having Elizabeth as his wife is her thriftiness. Even on the occasion of his marriage he does not forget his business. Like John Gilpin he attends to business first and to love affairs afterwards. He sends on in a hired brougham his two-days' bride, while he goes to his customers. When along with Elizabeth he is out in search of Henchard he wishes to give up the search, and to go no further, for if they did so would have to camp out for the night, 'and that will make a hole in a sovereign.' Even in the arrangement of marriage entertainments, it is Newson whose pocket is thinned away and not of this man.

Conclusion : No reader of the novel can help noticing the evil genius of this young man when he finds him too particurlar about his pounds, shillings and pence and his neglect of Elizabeth, to whom he has almost declared his love for the more brilliant Lucetta. But apart from this weakness he has many good qualities. He is not proud and haughty. Riches do not turn his mind. He is fairly considerate of Henchard and is grateful to him for his past friendship and patronage. He refuses the customer of a farmer for he has been already dealing with Henchard. He does not want to come in collision with Henchard. It is out of sheer self-defence that he has to do it. He gives him service and canvasses to get him a small seedshop, which he himself contributes largely. But nobody can be honestly impressed by all these things. One is easily led to believe that he is a favourite of fickle fortune.

ELIZABETH-JANE

Introduction. The very first page of the novel introduces to us a married couple. The mother has a baby—a girl in her arms. The horrible sale takes place and the mother along with her daughter is given away in auction to a sailor. Then after eighteen years again a mother and a daughter appear in the streets of Casterbridge. The baby is a grown up maiden. She has all the rich qualities of her mother when the latter was in the prime of her youth. And at once the reader thinks that probably this is the same small tiny kid. But the real clarification soon follows, for Susan returns to her husband Henchard for the sake of Elizabeth who is born of the sailor Newson after the death of the first baby. Miss Newson helps her mother in her search of Henchard and in the evening of the same day procures a cheap accommodation for themselves. She visits Henchard at his house and connects the long separated husband and wife. On meeting Henchard Susan proposes remarriage and soon after the ceremony is over, a happy domestic life is made all the sweeter by Jane. But the bliss of ignorance does not last long. The envelope containing the bitter truth is soon opened by Henchard after the death of Susan and then brings a period of great psychological complications. Elizabeth, who, as far had been regarded and loved to distraction, is despised and scorned. She has to leave her parental roof and serve Lucetta, a newly arrived Beauty at the town. Her lover, Farfrae had long been separated. She has to lose him for several years, for he falls in love with her mistress and marries her. Full of despair and helplessness, she takes to the work of netting and leaves the house of Lucetta. Occasionally she visits Henchard, and in his extreme needs returns to him and nurses him. However, she does not give up her sympathies for Farfrae and informs him of the intentions of her step father. Soon after the death of Lucetta, she captures the imagination of Farfrae again very strongly during her long country walks. Henchard becomes angry but in vain. She is as a matter of course, soon married to Farfrae, in the presence and company of her real father Newson who has sought her out after a long time. Having given Henchard a very sad shock by her behaviour, which kills him in distress, she leads a serene and resigned life.

Her person. Elizabeth-Jane belongs to the class of Hardy's full-length studies of women of a high order of personality. She is of the type of Tess, Sue, Eustacia, and Bathsheba. Her picture is drawn in the softest of half-tones, and it does not at once catch our eye. It is only after we have gained a long acquaintance with her story that she appears to us as full of fascination. She is the only girl in Hardy with 'aerial grey-eyes' which fit well with her earnest and sober mien. Then she is deep-feeling. Subtle-souled, grave and a sedate-looking creature. Really it is simple drapery that accords with her person well.

Her intellectuality. Elizabeth is intellectual in her own way and differs in this respect from Sue or Ethelberta who are also Hardy's intellectual women. Born of poor parents and nursed in the hard necessities of poor life, she has little of academic advantages, though she has other markedly developed qualities. "The woman had long perceived how jealously and constantly the young mind of her companion was struggling for enlargement; and yet now, in her eighteen years, it still remained but little unfolded. The desire—sober and repressed—of Elizabeth-Jane's heart was indeed to see to hear, and to understand. How could she become a woman of wider knowledge, higher repute—'better' as she termed it". Her gradual introduction to life in Casterbridge shows her the necessity of intellectual development. She at once becomes eager to acquire knowledge and tries hard to make herself better-accomplished. Her mind constantly runs on the question of enlarging her intellectual acquirements. She envies the accomplishment of the brilliant Lucetta. "You speak French and Italian fluently, no doubt. I have not been able to get beyond a wretchd bit of Latin yet." She reads voraciously. She has so many books borrowed from Farfrae, although Henchard thinks that she has bought them and regrets the waste of money involved in their purchase. Like her step father Henchard, she is fond of music and like others she is attracted by the songs of Farfrae. She is also a tolerably good dancer. She knows only one dance and dances on two occasions in the novel, first on the occasion of the national festival and secondly on the occasion of her marriage. And naturally enough Hardy

has taken a keen delight in representing this artistic accomplishment of the heroine.

Her obedience: Elizabeth had been so well schooled by poverty in her childhood that obedience to her superiors is naturally inculcated in her. She obeys her mother and in nursing and serving her, does everything instinctively. She obeys Hanchard also. When the Mayor comes to know of her growing passion for Farfrae, he commands her to stop all advances, and she instantly obeys. She submits quietly and tries to extinguish with patience the flame that had been kindled in her heart. Probably she knows that her love is only one sided, hence unmaidenly and unwise. Then she has also learnt renunciation from life. Like a good daughter, she bears patiently the scorns of Henchard and it is only in the extremity of her tortures that she leaves him to accept the service of Lucetta. But never does she forget him and soon she returns to him to serve and nurse him in his need. Really it is her obedient nature that makes Henchard's life happy for a time. But we should not stretch this quality of her character too far, for her subsequent treatment of Henchard, when she is burning in love of Farfrae during her long country walks, is very cold and nobody can excuse her rude behaviour shown to him at the time when the latter meets at her wedding day. Although she feels extremely sorry for this, yet it is simply too late. However, at the end, she obeys the instructions of the will of Henchard and prays for the peace of his soul in heaven.

Absence of jealousy in her : Jealousy which is the common weakness of her kind has not quite happily enough, influenced her character. She loves Farfrae even when he has fallen in love with Lucetta whom she also likes in a way. It is the extremity of her tortures that compels her to take to a separate lodging but that too is in front of the house of Lucetta where the married couple live. She is very particular about the welfare of these people for whom otherwise she would not have been so if jealousy were a trait in her character. She warns Farfrae against the uncertain temper of Henchard and Farfrae values her opinion. She marries him when the coquettish Lucetta dies of heart-attack and hysteria.

She is a counterpart of Oak the patient lover who waits of Bathsheba so very long and stands by her through fire and water.

Her reasonableness: All through her life Elizabeth shows her sweet reasonableness. This is because of her prudence and insight into the problems of life. Impulse or emotion seldom takes her off her guard. Fortune cannot madden her. She refrains from bursting out like a water-flower, as most of the Casterbridge girls would have done in her circumstances. Her triumph is tempered by circumspection, and she has the good sense not to make a fool of herself by the glamour of dress. In the matter of clothes she checks her gay fancies. She is only once taken away by the temptation of gaudy dress but soon she realizes her folly and mends it instantly. It is inconsistent with her past life to blossom gaudily. This is because of her reasonableness. But strangely enough, she indulges in dress at a time when Henchard cannot properly afford it. He is a mere seed-seller. But here we should not forget that she has been shot by golden arrow of Cupid and she deserves to be excused on this occasion for her slight indulgence in costly garmen's.

Her self-abnegation : The most prominent quality of Elizabeth's character which every body in the town of Casterbridge recognizes and which Hardy also likes his readers to appreciate is her self-sacrificing nature. She thinks more of other than of herself. She happily relinquishes her own claim in favour of the claims of others. It is a willingness to sacrifice her personal comfort and dignity to the common weal. White at the Three Mariners, she thinks of serving others rather than of serving herself. She does servant's work. Not to make Phoebe come up twice, she would go to the kitchen instead of ringing. She would even gather the coals if the coal-scuttle is overturned by cat, and not give trouble to her servants. She would thank the parlour-maid for every little service. She would carry a cup of cider or ale, and bread and cheese to Nance Mockridge. By doing such things she, of course, incurse the displeasure of Henchard but not of the readers. It is only to save Lucetta from the skimmington ride that she goes to her house. And when Lucetta faints, she nurses her until her death. She goes to

Henchard when he fails in business. It is really she who cheers him up, forgetting his past harshness towards her. It is for the sake of Farfrae that she degrades herself at the 'philosophic party' think and rightly too.

Her love of truth : The character of Elizabeth-Jane is marked with an intense love of truth, honesty and straightforwardness. Any suspicion of impropriety is to her like a red rag to a bull. Really her firm little character includes 'a craving for correctness of procedure that was almost vicious'. When she learns that Lucetta has married Farfrae, she condemns her in bitter tones. According to Duffin perhaps it is this quality together with a 'decency of heart' in her constitution that leads her to commit one bad lapse from virtue—her unkind dismissal of the hopefully-returning Henchard.

Her gravity : One cannot help observing that Elizabeth-Jane is more like a sage than a woman having the emotions, feelings and sentiments that are peculiar to her sex. She is usually serious and grave. She is self-possessed on all occasions, nothing can throw her off her balance. She knows life too well to be elated by joy or to be depressed by the frustration of her hopes. She has the field-mouse fear of the coulter of destiny despite fair promises, which is common among the thoughtful who have suffered early from poverty and destitution. She would not tempt Providence by being too gay. Nor can disappointment depress her. She has learnt the lesson of renunciation. She is remakably realistic. She knows that happiness is but an occasional episode in the general drama of pain and that neither she nor any human being deserves more than what is given to her. She has known then, the method of extracting from what little happiness is possible to mortals. She knows that "those minute forms of satisfaction that offer themselves to every body not in positive pain, which thus handled have much of the same inspiring effect upon life as wider interests cursorily embraced". Duffin is right in remarking that 'she shows herself a rare and special type of woman in hardships' and 'she is a litttle philosopher, learning to accept life's habit of substituting for the deeply-desired the not-desired so-much.'

Her humour : The secret of Elizabeth's character lies perhaps in her possession of a sense of humour. She is able

to note with amusement that 'when Lucetta had pricked her fingers they were as deeply concerned as if she were dying ; when she herself had been seriously sick or in danger they uttered a conventional word of sympathy at the news and forgot all about it immediately.' Duffin is of opinion that 'this sense of humour is an exceptional thing among Hardy's women, only Anne Garland and the Second Avice share the quality'.

Lucetta Templeman

Introduction : This brilliant, young and accomplished town beauty appears on the scene really very late, although we hear of her from Henchard when he speaks of her to Farfrae after Susan has returned and her remarriage is contemplated. But the moment she comes in the town after the death of Susan, she like Farfrae, creates a flutter. She comes to the place in order to attract and marry Henchard who had become by now the Mayor, the church-warden and what not. And she too was no poor Lucetta of Jersey but quite a rich heiress to the fortune of her aunt. But as chance would have it, she meets Farfrae a young attractive adventurer, and falls a victim to his love almost at first sight. After the disclosure of Henchard's past scandalous life about which she was previously quite ignorant, she hastily marries Farfrae far away from the madding crowd. She soon has the pleasure and honour of shaking hands with the Royal Personage. But her married life is not an unmixed blessing. Soon she discovers that it is a delusion. She incurs the displeasure of Henchard and there is no way out for her. Their married life is unfortunately every hour threatened by the fear of Henchard's nature. She is afraid of his imperious and dashing character even when he is mere no body in the town. And the fear becomes a fact when in spite of the best of intention Henchard who gives her letters to Jopp to be delivered to her, this evil minded Jopp opens the bundle full of passion. Fate instantly become her enemy. A skimmington-ride is soon taken out by mischief mongers of the Mixen Lane inn and poor Lucetta, having seen her own effigy with that of Henchard soon collapses and dies before it is dawn. The scandal is too much for her. Thus she comes late and goes out so early playing her part in the novel.

Her person : Lucetta is shown as a town beauty, with a zest for fashions and gee-gaws. Her movements are charming. Her gait has a flexuosness about it which avoids angularity of movement less from choice than from predisposition. She is an intensely attractive woman. Often we come across such women in the Wessex novels. She sets much store by her good looks, and is anxious to retain them as long as possible. She fears the time when she should grow plain. She is careful about her toilet, spending hours considering which dress she should wear. She dresses herself charmingly to attract Henchard and places herself in a position that can show her charms to the best advantage. She is, at every time, conscious of her charms and has the common vanity of her sex. However, her charms are of, a superficial kind, though they have immediate success.

Her accomplishments : Soon after her aunt dies, Lucetta becomes rich and accomplishments come to her almost uncalled. Her delicacy of taste is apparent to a marked degree. She has all, that circles she moves in, require. She writes charming letters, and can speak French and Italian fluently. She is quick-willed in conversation and skilled in the art of raillery of an inoffensive kind. During her conversation with Farfrae at the very first meeting she shines without effort. She also knows some card tricks to kill time. She loves music but it is sad that we do not hear any ditty from the lips of this Beauty.

Her sympathy : No reader can deny that Lucetta is amiable and of kindly disposition. She is ready to sympathise with the suffering. She is attracted towards Elizabeth-Jane by the sadness of her tone and words at their first meeting. On the contrary, she is grieved that lovers should be parted by the hard necessities of life. She is hugely pleased when Farfrae engages the young lover so that he is not to be parted from his beloved. How pleasant it is that she makes the statement. "I have resolved that all my servants shall have lovers if they want them." This very disposition attracts Henchard when he is sick and gloomy. We are told that she devoted herself to him, even regardless of the voice of scandal at Jeresey. She is, as it appears, made for love and love alone.

Her easy-going habits : Her early life with her father in garrison towns has made her flighty and unsettled. She has no fixed principles to guide her in her conduct. She readily shifts her allegiance from Henchard to Farfrae and decides to break with her past. Says she "I won't be a slave to the past, I'll love whom I choose!" The fortune she inherits from her aunt spoils her habits. With this fortune, her misfortune comes in. Like Hardy's other women, she loves the wrong man—Farfrae, and at the wrong time and the wrong place. But we are not inclined to judge her harshly. There is nothing positively bad in her character. Her failings are slight and pardonable. She has her own code of morals and manners. She is not consciously vicious. She thinks to pay back Henchard, knowing that she is responsible for his said plight.

Her impulsiveness : Lucetta is a creature of emotions and impulses. She is opposed to Elizabeth-Jane, whom she cannot appreciate because of this difference. Her love at first sight is purely impulsive. In her love with Henchard she goes too far. Her passionate letters show the intensity of her impulsiveness. Her constitution is not fit for reflection. The skimmington-ride completely brings about her nervous breakdown.

Conclusion : But she is a delicate creature. We feel pity for her death in the prime of her life when she is in the brink of love and riches, and looking forward with eager expectation to a period of joyful maternity. She is a victim of chance and irony as also of her own fighty character. Unfortunately she has no depth in her. She lives a surface life and looks up to Elizabeth-Jane as youth looks to age and sets much store by her own self.

SUSAN HENCHARD

Introduction : The moment the story opens, we meet Susan with her small boby in her arms. She is fatigued yet keeps pace with her indifferent husband along the road. She takes a basin of furmity but her husband in spite of her pro-

testations, takes strong doses of liquor. And soon the poor woman is disposed of in auction to a sailor—Newson, only for five guineas and five shillings. Then dropping her eyes again, and saying nothing, she takes up the child and follows the sailor to different parts of the world. Her baby by Henchard dies and she is blessed with another. After a period of eighteen years we again see her in the town of Casterbridge with her young daughter Elizabeth-Jane. Soon she finds Henchard and pardons him. The following day she meets Henchard in the evening and their remarriage is planned. A lodging befiting the dignity of the Mayor is procured for her and they are again husband and wife. But she has to live only for a few years more. She dies quietly leaving an envelope containing fatal information about Elizabeth's birth. Thus she passes out of the story so soon and so dramatically. However, her part in the life of Henchard is not insignificant.

Her person : Hardy remarks that the chief—almost the only attraction of Susan's face was its mobility. "When she looked down sideways to the girl, she became pretty, and even handsome, particularly that in the action her features caught slantwise the rays of the strongly coloured sun, which made transparencies of her eyelids and nostrils, and set fire on her lips when she plodded on in the shades of the hedge, silenty thinking, she had the hard, half apathetic expression of one who deems anything possible at the hands of Time and Chance, except, perhaps fair play. The first phase was the work of Nature, the second probably of civilization." But after a period of eighteen years we find a change in her person. It is brought about by the cruel, miserable and distressing life, she had to lead with Newson and afterwards. When she appears in the streets of Casterbridge, "her face had lost much of its rotundity, her skin had undergone a textural change, and if her hair had not lost colour, it was considerably thinner than heretofore. She was dressed in the mourning clothes of a widow." She has grown so pale that the boys call her 'The Ghost'. All through her appearance in the novel we find her in simple dress and quiet modest manners. Even on the occasion of her remarriage, she is not changed.

Her simple mindedness : Susan is simple, unlettered, and

a 'home-spun woman'. As wife of an ordinary hay-trusser, she knows nothing of the artificialities and sophistifications of fashionable life. Her simple mindedness expresses itself in every word she utters and in every deed she performs. She says to her husband when he begins auctioning her. "Michael you have talked this nonsense in public places before. A joke is joke, you may make it once too often, mind!" And as soon as the money is thrown by the sailor, we again note her simple-mindedness. She says, "If you touch that money, I and the girl go with the man. Mind, it is a joke no more." And her last word with which she makes departure are really very pathetic : "Mike I have lived with thee a couple of years and had nothing but temper! I'm no more to thee. I'll try my luck elsewhere. 'Twill be better for me and Elizabeth-Jane, both. So good bye!" She thinks that the sale is binding and that Newson has acquired a moral right over her person. It is not very difficult to realize her point of view. Her birth, the environment in which she has been brought up and the man to whom she has been married, are quite sufficient to explain the attitude of hers.

It was very late, while she was living in England after her return from Canada, that a friend to whom she confided her story ridiculed her grave acceptance of her position and disturbed the peace of her mind. She really felt relieved on receiving the report of Newson's death. She regarded herself as free and decided to seek out Henchard, her real husband.

Her Motherhood : The complex and sophisticated society of to-day may not like Susan the wife but no body can find fault with Susan the mother. She does not leave her Elizabeth-Jane but 'seizing the sailor's arm with her right hand, and mounting the little girl on her left,' 'goes out of the tent sobbing bitterly'. And when she is blessed with another baby by Newson after the death of her first issue, she is the same kind and loving mother. She never thinks of herself. She has no desire to fight the struggle of life. She has no desire for life after her constant struggle with poverty in a hard world. But for Elizabeth-Jane, she prudently realized that she was developing 'early into womanliness' at eighteen, and 'surveyed the daughter thoughtfully.' 'The right of the

girl made her sad—not valuely but by logical inference'. She 'groaned as she felt she could not aid in the search of Elizabeth's constant inquiry about knowledge.' Ultimately she 'pocketed her pride and set out in search of the first husband'. It was 'the best initiatory step.' 'A hundred times she had been upon the point of telling her daughter, Elizabeth Jane, the true story of her life' 'but she had refrained.' 'It had seemed, indeed folly to think of making Elizabeth-Jane wise', and she left for Henchard to take what steps he might choose to that end. It is for the happiness of the girl that she keeps up the deception approved of by her husband. She also takes another step involving fatal consequences. She does not tell Henchard the truth of Elizabeth-Jane's birth. Why? Only for the sake of Jane. She knows the temper of Henchard and fears that he may not love Jane if she told the truth. And it is true, for when out of curiosity he opens the letter which he is requested to open after Jane's marriage, he is dried up and is cold and scornful. It is fate that crosses her simple schemes. There is no fault of hers, indeed. Her motherhood is so pure and simple.

Her conscientiousness : Like Henchard and her daughter, Susan is also honest and conscientious. Whatever the voice of conscience is, she obeys it. We find her committing one deception which an honest wife is not expected to commit. She goes through a second marriage with Henchard. But it is all due to her blind love for the daughter. It is the mother Susan who does it. Her maternal love overrides her principles. Otherwise how honest and fair she is when she is not prepared to wrong the memory of Newson by allowing Jane to adopt the name of Henchard, when she can pass and passes off as her daughter. She reveals the secret only at the right time but fate has something different in store for her. In short, Susan, the fair creation of nature, is characterized by 'honesty in dishonest.'

———

CHAPTER XXVII

A BRIFE SUMMARY OF *THE TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES*

Discovery of Jack Durheyfield's Parentage and Ancestry : On one evening in May, Jack Durbeyfield was going back to his village, Marlott, from the town of Shaston. He was met by Parson Tringham who told him that he was a representative of the old famous knightly family of the d'Urbervilles. Jack Durbeyfield wrs very much excited by this information. He asked a boy, who happened to pass that way, to send a horse and carriage for him, for he had decided to go home according to the dignity of the d'Urbervilles' family.

The May-Dance or Club-Walking in Morlott : In Marlott, the May-dance still continued in the form of 'Club-Walking.' The members of 'Club-Walking' were only women, mostly young ; they walked in procession and danced on each anniversary. The Club-Walking was in progress and when they came round by 'The Pure Drop Inn,' one of them shouted that Tess Durbeyfield's father was riding home in a carriage. Tess felt very sorry for her father who was making a fool of himself before the eyes of others.

Dance in the Enclosure and the Appearance of Tree Young Men : Any way, the club-walkers including Tess reached the enclosure where there was to be dancing on the green. As there were no men in the company, the girls danced at first with each other. As the dance was in progress, three young students who were spending their holidays in a walking tour through the Vale of Blackmore, appeared on the scene. They were brothers and the youngest, Angel was his name, seemed to be very much amused when he saw a bevy (group) of girls dancing without male partners. In a spirit of challenge Angel entered the green and began to dance with the first girl that came to hand.

Tess's Disappointment : Every one grew jealous of that girl for having the first male partner that evening. Tess Durbeyfield was deeply disappointed and hurt in that Angel did not dance with her. Angel also felt sorry for her. He wished that he had inquired her name. But then he walked rapidly to join his brothers and dismissed the subject from his mind. Tess, however, could not forget the incident so easily. Suddenly she remembered her father's strange appearance and manner and moved towards her cottage.

Tess's Mother, Mrs. Joan Durbeyfield, tells her about the Discovery : As she entered the cottage, she saw her mother standing near the washing-tub and at the same time rocking her youngest child. Her mother, Mrs. Joan Durbeyfield told her that it had been discovered that they were the greatest gentle folks in the whole country, that their real name was d'Urberville. Tess was not much impressed by the information. Anyhow, leaving the house to Tess, Mrs. Durbeyfield left for Rolliver's (a public-house) to fetch her husband. Besides Tess, there were six more helpless children in the family who mainly depended upon the whims of their parents. It grew late and neither father nor mother came back.

Scene at Ralliver's Inn : At last, Tess went out in search of them. At Rolliver's her father was making merry over the discovery. Mrs. Durbeyfield sat beside her husband, and suggested that Tess must be sent to Trantridge to claim relationship with a rich lady of the name of d'Urberville. They thought it would lead to a grand marriage. On Tess's arrival at Rolliver's they hastily finished their all and made for home. It was eleven o'clock when all the family slept.

Tess's Journey to Casterbridge and the Tragic Death of Horse Prince : Next morning Durbeyfield had to start for Casterbridge with the bechives to be delivered to the retailers. At half-past one, Mrs. Durbeyfield informed Tess that the old man coldn't go. Hence, Tess and her younger brother Abraham set out for Casterbridge in the rickety little waggon driven by horse Prince. On the way, her waggon met with a terrible accident. The mail-cart had driven into her waggon. As a result of it horse Prince died. It was a great tragedy. The bread-winner had been taken away from them.

Tess's Journey to Trantridge to Meet the Rich Mrs d'Urberville : The horse being dead, the huggling business became disorganised. Tess's mother suggested that she should go to the very rich Mrs. d'Urberville and ask for help. Realizing her responsibility in the great tragedy, Tess agreed to seeing the rich lady. Rising early next day she took a van for Trantridge. The d'Urbervilles or Stoke-d'Urbervilles, as they at first called themselves, were not the direct descendants of d'Urbervilles. On reaching d'Urberville mansion Tess was greeted by a tall youg man called Alexander d'Urberville (Alec in short). He told her that she could not see Mrs. d'Urberville, his mother as she was an invalid. After much hesitation, Tess revealed the purpose of her visit to him. Having failed to see the lady, she made her way back home. But she had met the wrong man and desired by him.

Letter from Mrs. d'Urberville : Next day on reaching home, her mother told her that there was letter from Mrs. d'Urberville She wanted her to look after a little fowl-farm. Tess hesitated to go there. Meanwhile Mrs. Durbeyfield insisted on her going there, for in her opinion, there was every chance of the gentleman marrying Tess. Realizing her responsibility towards the family, Tess agreed to go at last though she didn't quite like Alec being there.

Journey to Trantridge in Alec's gig : On the appointed day Tess set out for Trantridge to take up the job at the fowl-farm. Alec came himself to fetch her and gave her lift in his gig. Alec drove at a tremendous speed with Tess beside him. Against her wish, he kissed her, soon after her hat was blown off ; she got down from the gig and refused to mount it again. She walked on foot and reached the poultryfarm.

Tess as a Fowlkeeper at d'Urberbille Mansion : The fowls, which Tess had to look after, were housed in an old thatched cottage. Next morning she was told that Mrs. d'Urberville wanted the fowls as usual. The owner and mistress of the estate was a blind woman of not more than sixty. The old lady spoke to the birds affectionately and asked Tess to look after them kindly. In the meantime, Alec made himself familiar to Tess in a clever manner. He would call her his cousin.

Tess's weekly journey to Chaseborough and Unfortunate Meeting with Alce : The younger women in and about Trantridge were light-hearted. Every night they went to Chaseborough, a market-town two or three miles distant, to drink. At last Tess was also compelled by matrons to join in these weekly journeys to Chaseborough. On a Saturday in September she got very late at Chaseborough and impatiently waited for her companions to go back home. Alec offered to take her but she declined his offer. At last Trantridge people began to leave for home in a group. It was quarter-past eleven. On a trifle matter, Tess fell out with the Trantridge group, and they started condemning her. At this stage Alec appeared on a horseback and asked her to jump on the horseback behind him. She did it.

Tess No Langer a Maiden : Alec and Tess rode along. He drove her miles away from Trantridge. He stopped the horse and they were in a wood. She sat down among the leaves and shivered. The wood, called the Chase, was covered with thick darkness, although morning was not far off. Soon Tess was fast asleep and he put his cheek on hers. She was seduced. One wondered why the wrong man got the woman.

Tess's Home-Return : About four months had passed since her arrival at Trantridge. Without informing anybody, she decided to return home. She was very sad. As she was approaching home, an artisan carrying a tin-pot of red paint wrote on a stile : 'THY, DAMNATION, SLUMBERETH, NOT'. They entered her heart with accusatory horror'. It was as if this man had known her recent history. When Tess entered her house, her heart ached to see the condition inside. She told all about the very unfortunate incident in her life to her mother. With great courage, her mother said, 'Well, we must make the best of it, I suppose.'

Her Voluntary Confinement at Rome : In spite of being at home, the sense of her guilt weighed heavy on her mind. Her bed-room became more and more the place of her shelter. It was only after dark that she went out. After a long period of seclusion, she decided to do outdoor work in her native village.

Tess Feeding of her Child in the field : It was harvesting season and she joined hands with others. The reaping-machine was in action ; she was binding the corn into sheafs. It became lunch time. Her younger sister came with her lunch and baby. She took the baby from her and with great courage unfastened her frock and began suckling the child. She looked at the child with contempt and also with passion. Anyhow she had begun to gather courage and look people calmly in the face.

Her Baby's Illness and tragic Death : But now that her moral sorrows were passing away, a fresh trouble arose. The baby had been suddenly taken ill. It had not been baptized. It was night ; death was approaching the baby. In the absence of the parson she baptized the child herself and called it 'Sorrow'. But the little child breathed its last, and it was buried in the churchyard where all unbaptized infants and damned souls are laid.

Life at Talbothay's Dairy : Tess decided to leave her village and work at Talbothay's Dairy, Now she would be the dairymaid Tess. She reached the Valley of the Great Dairies which was watered by the river Froom. She entered Talbothays Dairy-farm at half-past four o'clock, the milking-time. The master-dairyman Mr. Crick was glad to get a new hand. Immediately she was given work and began milching the cow. Here her attention was drawn towards a milker whom everybody addressed as 'Sir'. After some time, she remembered that he was the pedestrian who had joined in the club-dance at Mariott and had not danced with her. But he did not remember her. Beneath the dress of the milker that he wore, there was something educated, reserved and subtle. When the milking was finished for the evening, they went indoors where Mrs. Crick looked after things. Only two or three of the maids besides Tess slept in the dairy-house ; most of the helpers went to their homes. Tess's bed-chamber was a large room over the milk-house ; the other three milkmaids also slept there. They were young blooming girls.

Angel Clare at Talbothay's Dairy : Angel Clare had come at Talbothay's Dairy as a six months' pupil, his aim

being to acquire a practical skill in the various processes of farming. Of the three sons of Mr. Clare of Emminster, he was the only son who had not taken a University degree. His father, the old Vicar, fondly hoped that Angel would take orders and join the Church but he felt he was least suited for it. Finally he decided in favour of farming: that seemed to him to be his true vocation. So we find Angel Clare at twenty-six years of age at Talbothay. He was a boarder at the dairyman's. His room was a big attic which ran the whole length of the dairy-house. It would only be reached by a ladder. After some time, he found a real delight in the company of maids and men. In the large room where all the hands breakfasted, Clare sat in one corner away from the main table, for Mrs. Crick thought he was too genteel to eat at their table. Many days had passed since Tess's arrival but he hardly noticed that she was present at table. Then, one day his attention was drawn towards her by her musical sweet, voice. 'What a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature that milkmaid is !' he said to himself.

Tess's Chance Meeting with Clare in Dairyman's Garden : One day at dusk; milking over, Tess was walking in the garden alone. She heard musical notes from Clare's attic. She kept on listening. But, tired of playing, he came round the fence, and spoke to her. During their conversation, both discovered that they understood life in sad terms. From now onwards they grew interested in each other and added to their knowledge of each other.

Beginnings of Love at Talbothays : Tess and Clare were coming unconsciously closer to each other. She had never been in her recent life so happy as she was now. Tess woke up everybody at the dairy early in the morning. Clare and herself being two persons to get up first at the dairy-house, they walked along together to the spot where the cows lay. Gradually, the others joined. The milking progressed till it was time for breakfast. Thus they met every morning and in these early hours . she impressed him most. Tess's three chamber-companions were in love with Clare though they knew that he did not bother about any one of them. Tess knew that he preferred her but the question was : Should she go further ? With her unfortunate past, she could never

conscientiously allow any man to marry her now. But Clare would not miss any opportunity of meeting her all alone. She decided to make all efforts to avoid him. She wanted that he could marry any one of her three companions—Retty Priddle, Izz Huett and Marian.

Visit to Mellstock Church and Chance Meeting with Clare and His Timely Help : It was July and very hot. On one Sunday morning the milking over, Tess and her three companions decided to go to Mellstock Church, some three or four miles distant from the dairy-house. It had been raining for the last two days and the girls found that the lane to Mellstock was flooded at certain places. At one place the water had collected to a distance of fifty yards. They were dressed in their best and would not wade through it. While they thus stood hopelessly they saw Angel Clare coming towards them through the water. He was out that day to see how much damage had been done to the hay by the flood. He approached the girls and offered to carry each one of them in his arms through the pool. After much hesitation they agreed. Marian, Izz, Retty were transported to the other side by him in his arms. When he carried Tess, he moved slowly and admired her beauty. Marian told Tess that he loved her. She too could no longer conceal from herself that she loved Angel Clare. And yet she didn't want the emotion to grow.

Clare Embraces Tess : It was the month of August, and still very hot. They milked entirely in the meads for coolness and did not drive the cows into the barton. Tess was milking in one corner, hidden from others. Clare had followed her round and he sat under his cow watching her. Madly charmed by her, all of a sudden he jumped up from his seat, went quickly towards her and clasped her in his arms. She was taken completely by surprise. But she yielded to his embraces, her person flooding with joy. He declared his love to her. Something deep had happened to both lives. Tess retired to her chamber but Clare was restless. He was driven towards her by every heave of his pulse. What to do ? He decided to go home and consult friends on the subject.

Clare at His Parents' Home to Consult on the Subject : Clare started for home. He had written home about his arrival. His parents and brothers jumped up to welcome him as soon as he entered. His brothers noted the change in his manner. He was getting to behave like a farmer. After family prayers in the evening, he had a chance to discuss matters with his father. His father suggested that his friend and neighbour, Dr. Chant's daughter, Mercy Chant, would be most suitable for him. Clare pleaded Tess'e case and narrated her many qualities. But the parents were not very agreeable. However, they said that it was better not to act in a hurry, and that they would not object to see her. Soon he left for Talbothays again.

Clare Helps Tess at Skimming and Proposes Marriage : On his return, as he entered the dairy-house, the clock struck three. It was the afternoon skimmind hour. Mr. and Mrs. Crick had gone to market and the rest were enjoying their afternoon nap. Old Deborah was to help Tess at skimming. Clare asked him to retire and took his place, while at skimming, he declared that he would like her to be his wife. 'O Mr. Clare—I cannot be your wife—I cannot be !' He was very much surprised by this answer and pressed her to tell him the reasons. She could not give any reasons ; tears stood in her eyes.

Tess and Clare Again Together : At the next cheese-making, Tess and Clare were again left alone together. They were breaking up the masses of curd before putting them into vats. He again pressed for marriage, and she refused. He insisted on knowing the reasons behind her refusal. With great difficulty, she said that she would tell him everything next week, on Sunday. But her courage failed her ; she could not tell him. Day after day they meet but somewhat less constantly. Thus, two or three weeks went by. He kept on wooing her orally and silently whenever there was an occasion.

Clare Renews His Proposal : One morning between three and four, Clare again renewed his proposal. She wanted time to think over the proposal. He could not resist her lovely figure and brought his lips to her cheek one moment. In the afternoon milking was done in the meads as usual.

Milking over, it became late for milk to reach the station. Clare offered to take it asking Tess to accompany him.

Clare and Tess go to station with the Milk : She mounted the spring-waggon beside Clare. They went along the road through the mead, in the diminishing daylight. It became breezy and the sky was overcast with clouds. They were excited by the feeling of being close together. It was chilly and he wrapped round them both a piece of soil cloth. Again he raised the old question and wanted an answer. 'I'll try', She said, The cans of milk were unladen in the rain. She mounted again beside Clare and they moved back into the night. Clare was insisting on an answer. She started by telling her past beginning with her birth-place, Marlott. But when it came to telling him the actual happening, her courage failed her at the last moment. He econouraged her and at last got the 'yes' from her. She had consented to be his wife.

Tess Writes to Her Mother : Tess wrote a very touching letter to her mother the very next day. Her mother, in her reply, asked her very strongly not to reveal her past trouble to him. Having received that command from her mother, Tess was less agitated now. Throughout October she lived in great happiness. There was hardly a touch of earth in her love for Clare. They wandered about gaily, Clare keeping his arm round her waist. When she retired to her chamber, her chamber companions teased her playfully. She was once again reminded of her past, and decided to tell all her history to Angel despite her mother's command.

Tese's Penitential Mood: After having said 'yes', Tess fell into a penetential mood. She did not want to keep Angel in the dark. She wrote again to her mother apparently to notify the wedding day but really to seek her advice once again. But no reply came. In the meantime, Angel had decided to Wellbridge immediately after his marriage, so that he could study the working of a flour-mill there. He obtained lodgings there in a farm-house which had been once the mansion of a branch of the d'Urberville family.

Shopping Together : The marriage day was fast approaching. Angel felt that he would like to spend a day with her

before the wedding, somewhere away from the dairy. Therefore, they went to the nearest town to do some purchases. For the first time in their lives, they shopped as partners. In the evening they returned to the inn at which they had put up. Two men came out and passed by her ; one of them made some insulting remarks at her. At that Clare struck the man on the chin with the full force of his fist. Late in the evening they reached the dairy and parted tenderly that night.

Tess's Letter Slips under the Carpet and does not reach Clare. But Tess was much disturbed from within. She could not declare her past by word of mouth, but there was another way. She wrote down in four pages the clear narrative of her past life. She put the letter into an envelope and slipped it under Clare's door. In the morning, Clare descended from his attic as usual. He met her at the bottom of the stairs and kissed her. There was no change in him ; nor did he mention anything about the letter. Every morning and night he was the same.

The Wedding Day. It was the New Year's Eve—the wedding day. They did not rise at milking time. For the last one week they were being treated as guests at the dairy. Nobody was invited from Marlott. None was to come from Angel's family. As Clare's behaviour towards her had not changedat all, Tess doubted if he had received her note at all. She dashed to his room and to her surprise found the letter beneath the carpet. She could not let him read it now, and descending to her own room, she destroyed it there. There was no time now for anything ; all had to dress up. The dairyman and Mrs. Cricks were asked to accompany them as witnesses. She still wanted to confess but he had no time to listen to her. Now, they drove to Church in a closed carriage.

The Marriage. The marriage being by licence there were only a dozen or so of people in the church. The service went off well. As they came out of church, the ringers swung the bells. By the time they reached home, she was spiritless. She was Mrs. Angel Clare, indeed, but had she any moral right to the name? Afternoon came, and with it the hour for departure. They had decided to spend a few days at the old farm-house near Wellbridge Mill.

Departure from Tallbothays and the Crowing of a Cock. At two o'clock, they left Talbothays farm. Clare shook hands with the dairyman and his wife, and expressed his last thanks to them for their attentions. As they moved out, there was the crowing of a cock. 'Oh', said Mrs. Crick, 'an afternoon crow!" The others also noted the crow and felt it was an ill omen.

Residence in Wellbridge Farm-house. They drove along the road and reached the Wellbridge farmhouse. Here they shared their first common meal alone. It soon began to rain. Here they also received a jewel-case which Clare's godmother had left for the use of his wife. They were awaiting Jonathan who was to bring their luggage from Talbothays. They began supper and shortly after Jonathan arrived. Tess was still not in her best spirits.

Mutual Confession and Clare's Estrangement with Tess. Seeing her in low spirits, Clare told her about his promise of telling her his faults. He began his narrative of confessions. He told her how he once plunged into forty-eight hours' dissipation with a stranger. He asked for her forgiveness. Then she began her story of her acquaintance with Alce d'Urberville and its results. As her narrative ended, outwardly nothing had changed ; yet the essence of things had changed. Her disclosure had affected him with all the force. He looked at her with dazed senses and said, "Am I to believe this?" She pleaded for mercy and forgiveness, but he said, "I repeat, the woman I have been loving is not you." He could no longer stay in the room, and walked out. She followed him and kept on pleading with all her heart, "Angel!—Angel ! I was a child—a child when it happened!' But he had nothing except reproaches to heap on her. He asked her to return to the house and go to bed. She obeyed and lay down in bed duly. Later on, Angel also came back and slept downstairs on the coach in the sitting room.

The Separation. In the morning Clare woke up first. Tess followed suit. They sat down on the same side of the breakfast table so that their glances did not meet. They lived for two more days in the same house but no love was lost between them. They discovered that they could live no longer together. Finally, she told him that he must go away

from her, and she herself would go back home. They packed up their luggage and next morning left the farm-house. Clare left her at Weatherbury so that she could go home without much difficulty. He now handed her a packet containing a fairly good sum of money, which he had obtained from his bankers for the purpose. These done, he left Tess who was driven home by the coachman.

Tess's Home Return and Immediate Departure. As Tess reached home, her mother was busy washing clothes. She expressed great surprise at her arrival. Tess told her what had happened. Her father received the news with a great shock and wondered whether the person really married her or was it like the first. At this Tess felt certain that she could no longer live at home. Making use of Clare's note that she was going to meet him, she bade her parents farewell. Before departure she took twenty-five of the fifty pound Clare had given her, and handed the sum over to her mother.

Angel Clare at Emminster. Three weeks after the marriage, Clare could be seen moving all alone towards the parsonage of his father. In his wanderings he had noted that the Empire of Brazil offered land on exceptionally advantageous terms. He had come to Emminster to tell his plan to his parents. 'But where's your wife, dear Angel?' cried his mother. He explained that he had left her at her mother's and come here to tell them that he was going to Brazil.

Izz's Testimony of Tess's Love for Clare. Before going to Brazil, Clare called at the Wellbridge farm-house to pay off trifle of rent. There he met Izz just accidentally. He offered her a lift in his carriage. During the conversation, he told her that he had separated from his wife and was going to Brazil all alone. 'You love me very much, Izz?' he suddenly asked. 'More than Tess'. 'No', she murmured 'not more than she. Because nobody could love'ee more than Tess did ! She would have laid down her life for 'ee. I could do no more.' He took the train that night for London, and five days after sailed for Brazil.

Tess's Pecuniary Difficulties. Eight months had passed since the parting of Tess with Clare. After leaving Marlott, she had only got irregular employment. Her money was run-

ning out. At the same time, she received a letter from her mother asking to send twenty pounds urgently for the thatching of the house. She did send twenty pounds.

Clare's Illness in Brazil. Meanwhile her husband was also facing difficulties. At this moment, he was lying ill of fever in the clay land near Curitiba in Brazil. It was not easy to stand all types of weather or Brazilian plains.

Tess's Flight to Escape an Evil Man's Designs. Facing difficulties of regular employment, Tess decided to go to an upland farm recommended to her by Marian who had come to know of her circumstances. Marian herself was working at this upland spot. While on her way to this farm, someone over-took her at night time, and had evil designs on her. She recognised him as the man whom Angel had knocked down at the inn. To escape him, she suddenly took to her heels and hid herself in a plantation.

Tess at Flintcomb Ash Farm. At last she reached the upland farm at Flintcomb-Ash where Marian worked. As soon as she entered the village, she met Marian who told her that corn and swede were all they grew and she would be given swedehacking. Tess signed the agreement and got a lodging as well. When Marian and Tess set to work next day, they mostly talked of the time when they lived and loved at Talbothays. Next day when she met the farmer, her new master, she recognised him to be the same man from whom she had taken flight. Anyway, she had nothing to fear from him. But her life to the farm was very difficult. Now Izz also joined Marian and Tess at the farm.

Tess at Emminster Vicarage. Having not heard from her husband for a long time, she decided to go to Emminster Vicarage for news about him and express her grief at his silence. On one Sunday she set out for Emminster. A year had passed since her marriage. She covered the distance of fifteen miles to the Vicarage on foot. She entered the gate of the Parson's house, rang the door-bell, but there was none to answer her ringing. They were all at Church. She couldn't meet Clare's parents and plodded back along the road by which she had come.

Tess's Accidental Meeting with Alec d'Urberville. While

returning from Emminster Vicarage, she reached the village of Evershead. There she met Alec d'Urberville who was preaching in a barn. The words of Scripture sounded odd from his mouth. As soon as Alec saw her, his old passion revived. She tried to escape him but he followed her and overtook her. He told her how penitent he was and how he had been converted by that sincere person at Emminster. He accompanied her to a good distance and then left her, for he had to preach at six again. While leaving, he said, "Well—you will see me again".

Alec comes to Flintcomb-Ash. It was dusk when she drew near to Flintcomb Ash. Several days had passed since her disappointing journey to Emminster. She was afield. Alec came in sami-clerical dress and asked her if she could be his wife. She said, 'No'. He could know from her answers that she was a deserted wife. His old passion for her was at its strongest. Yet she would not care for him. After sometime Alec again paid her a visit. He had started from home to go to Casterbridge Fair where he had to preach the Word, but instead he had come to see her. He wanted to embrace her but had to go away disappointed.

Alec's Third Visit. It was the dawn of March morning. Tess worked standing on the platform of the threshing-machine. Just before the dinner-hour, Alec had come dressed in a tweed-suit of fashionable pattern. He patiently waited for Tess to finish her job. As the machine was to operate throghout the night, Tess set down among the wheat bundles and began her dinner. Alec came up to her and told her that he had given up preaching entirely. He had no faith left. 'Why, you can have the religion of loving—kindness and purity at least, if you can't have—what do you call it—dogma'. Not heeding what she said, he spoke harshly of her husband. Infuriated, she took one of her leather gloves and struck him flat on the mouth; blood began to ooze. He controlled himself and saying 'I will be your master' again, he left her.

Alec Again. Alec was again at the farm. Tess was busy helping the man on the machine. At last she untied her last sheaf and Alec was immediately at her side. 'I will

walk with you as far as your home', he said. During the walk he promised to help her and her parents and little sister. But she would not listen. He had to go away once again disappointed.

Tess writes to Clare. After taking supper she sat down to write in a passionate mood to Clare. She wrote to him how completely unhappy she was without him and how much evil was threatening her life at every step. She apealed to him to come and save her from all evil. Her letter duly reached the vicarage and was redirected by old Mr. Clare to Angel, but it was to reach him late because of his distace inland.

Clare's sad Experiences in Brazil and his Penitent Mood. Clare's experiences of Brazil had been sad. The severe illness from which he had suffered shortly after his arrival had never wholly left him. He had almost decided to give up farming there. He began to think he was hasty in judgment towards Tess. The words of Izz came back to his mind. He recalled Tess's face and regretted deeply for what he had done. Tess, on her part, dreamt of his arrival in response to her letter, and began doing everything that would please him. She began to practise the ditties that he liked.

Liza-Lu Arrives at Flintcomb-Ash Farm. Then all of a sudden, in one of these days, her younger sister Liza-Lu arrived at Flintcomb-Ash. She informed Tess that mother had fallen serously ill and father was not very well either. Deeply grieved to hear this, she decided to leave for home.

Tess Back Home on Hearing of her Mother's Illness'. She undertook the journey home that very night. On reaching home she looked after her parents and devoted her heart and soul to the needs of children. Her mother began to improve but father's ill health was of the same indefinite kind. When indoor necessities ceased, she started working on the garden and allotment of the Durbeyfields. One day Tess kept on working in the garden during the night. Some others also worked on their allotments.

Alec at Tess's Garden Plot. Heaps of dead weeds and refuse were burning on many of the plots. Tess was busy stirring the clods on her plot and sang her foolish little

songs. All of a sudden, fire flared up and she saw the face of Alec d'Urberville. He told her that he came digging there entirely to see her. He promised to help her family but she kept on refusing. Angered, he went away from there.

Death of Tess's Father'. Tess moved homewards. Half way she was met by Liza-Lu who told her that father was dead. It was a terrible blow. It was for his life that the house and premises were held under a lease. Now destiny would make them landless.

The Durbeyfields move out of Marlott, It was the old Lady-Day and the labourers who did not wish to remain in old places removed themselves to the new farms for fresh employment. On this Lady-Day she had to go elsewhere. As she sat reflecting on the position of the household, Alec approached the cottage. She told him that they had decided to go to Kingsbere. Alec asked her to come to his garden-house at Trantridge. At last Mrs. Durbeyfield and family loaded their belongings, sat at the top of the waggon, and moved out of the village.

Shelter in the Family Vault of the d'Urbervilles'. On reaching Kingsbere, Mrs. Durbeyfield was told that the rooms she wanted had been let out because her letter reached late. Houseless, Mrs. Durbeyfield decided to camp for the night in the family vault of d'Urberville. Alec reached there too and asked Tess to command him do anything.

Angel Comes Back to Emminster Vicarage. At last Angel came back from Brazil. He joined her parents of Emminster vicarage. He had run down so much that he almost looked a skeleton. His mother was sorry to see his condition. She gave him Tess's recent note in which she had said 'It is all unjustice I have received at your hands.'

Clare in Search of Tess. Angel tried to find out the whereabouts of Tess. Failing to receive information he decided to go out in search of her. With some difficulty he could find out Mrs. Durbeyfield's cottage in Kingsbere. He told her that he was Tess's husband and wanted to see her at once. She told him that she did not know where Tess was staying. On much insistence, she told him at last that Tess was at Sandbourne.

Clare at Sandbourne and Disappointing Meeting with Tess'. Clare reached Sandbourne at eleven o'clock that night. With the help of an intelligent postman he learnt that one d'Urberville lived at the Herons. The Herons was an ordinary villa. He rang, and the landlady herself opened the door. He was shown into the front room and after a while Tess appeared on the threshold. She was in a cashmere dressing-gown of gray-white. 'Tess'! he said huskily, 'can you forgive me for going away ?' Can't you—com to me ?' 'It is too late', said she, her voice sounding hard through the room. She told him how she kept on waiting for him till he (Alec) kept on saying that Clare would not come. He (Alec) was kind to all of them after father's death. 'He is upstairs. I hate him now, because he told me a lie—that you would not come again ; and you have come !' But—will you go away, Angel, please, and never come any more ?' she added. 'Ah—it is my fault !' said Clare. After a minute he was in the street walking along he did not know whither.

Tess Murders Alec. Tess entered Alec's room. She accused him of deceiving and keeping her away from her husband. In a fit of great anger, she stabbed him to death. Tess went out of the Herons quietly. But immediately the landlady discovered about the murder and the alarm was given.

Tess Joins Clare. Meanwhile Angel Clare had walked automatically along the way by which he had come. As he went along, he unconsiously looked back. Tess was following him. She joined him. To avoid meeting any possible wayfarers he left the high road, and took a footpath under some fir-trees. She told him what she had done and in all tenderness, he promised, 'I will not desert you ! I will protect you by every means in my power, dearest love, whatever you may have done or not have done !' Then they walked on under the trees.

Clare and Tess Rest at an Empty Mansion. Clare suggested that they should move in a general way towards the interior of the country, where they could hide for a time; later on they could make for some port. After covering many miles they reached an empty mansion called Bramshurst Court; only an old woman acted as its caretaker. They

spent five days in it in absolute seclusion. They remained there for yet another day. Then they felt that somebody had come to know of their presence and they decided to leave. They got into the forest. His plan was to proceed to the north, get to a port and away.

Tess's sleep in the Heathem Temple and her arrest. At about midnight they passed Melchester. The night grew as dark as cave. As they proceeded, they came across a roofless structure of huge pillars. 'It is Stonehenge !' said Clare. 'The heathen temple you mean ?' By now Tess was very tired, she flung herself upon a slab that lay close at hand and was sheltered from the wind by a pillar. Soon she fell asleep. Soon they were surrounded by the police. Finding himself in a helpless situation, Clare requested to them : 'Let her finish her sleep !' After a while she woke up. Quickly realizing the situation, she stood up and added quietly, 'I am ready'.

Tess's Death : Justice was done to her. In the course of time she was sentenced to death. As a black flag went up the staff of the large red-brick building where she was imprisoned, Clare and 'Liza-Lu bent themselves down to the earth, as if in prayer, and remained thus for a long time. As soon as they had strenght they arose, joined hands again, and went on. 'Justice was done, and the President of the Immortals, in Aeschylean phrase, had ended his sport with Tess.

———

CHAPTER XXVIII

2 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. *Disscuss the sub-title of the novel "Tess of the d'Urbervilles". Is Hardy justified in calling it" A pure woman"?*

Or

In what sense does Hardy call Tess 'A pure woman'? Do you agree?

Ans. The title of the novel reads as follows :

TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES—A PURE WOMAN

(Faithfully Presented by) Thomas Hardy

Thus, the expression 'A pure woman' is used as a sub-title of the novel. In the preface of the novel, Hardy says:

> "Respecting the sub-title, to which allusion was made above, I may add that it was appended at the last moment, after reading the final proofs, as being the estimate left in a candid mind of the heroine's character—an estimate that nobody would be likely to dispute. It was disputed more than anything else in the book. *Melius fuerat non scribere.* But there it stands."

From this it is clear that Hardy added the sub-title only as a second thought. Ater reading the final proofs, he felt that the ultimate and final impression left by the heroine's character was that of a pure woman. But, since that time when the sub-title was added to the novel, it continues to be disputed. The public of Hardy's time did not accept the sub-title easily. Till recently it has been a matter of dispute among many critics and admirers of Hardy. With the change in morals in the 20th century, and with the wider outlook, it is less a

matter of dispute today. But even then the controversy is there. If we try to understand the implications of the expression 'a pure woman', there is hardly any ground for dispute. In order to understand the justification of the sub-title, it is essential to keep two things in mind :

(1) Firstly, Hardy was writing his novel against the background of Victorian society. The expression 'Victorian Society' has to be carefully considered in the context of this novel. The Victorian Society had a certain specific social and moral code. In other words, the majority of people living in Victorian age had definite conceptions of what was moral and what was immoral. In the case of morals for women the Victorian society was particularly very narrow at the same time rigid. It was more or less uniformly believed during the Victorian times that there was a double moral standard'!: One for man and another for woman. Man had enough freedom in society, but woman was bound by many restrictions. She was not allowed to read books where sex was discussed. The classical example of this is that Fielding's novel *Tom Jones* was banned in Victorian society. It was not thought proper that a girl of good upbringing should read such a book. It was declared immoral. The result of all this was that woman in Victorian society became 'prudes', that is, they grew sophisticated and refined from outside within the devil quite often worked. Hardy was a late Victorian. But in his ideas he was a modernised. In many respects he differed from the Victorian public. His ideas on love-marriage and sex as expressed in his novels came to be considered as revolutionary. His novel, *Jude the Obscure* was publicly burnt and he was declared both an immoral person and an atheist. There is, of course, no justification for such criticism against Hardy. The one thing which is to be noted here is that the sub-title of the novel was mainly criticised in his time and latter on against this Victorian conception of morals. Even Hardy knew it. He makes Angel Clare first the victim of Victorian morals, and under their influence Clare abandones Tess. But in Brazil, away from the limited background of Victorian morals, Clare began to think the question of woman's chastity in a wider context. The more he thought about it, the more he felt that he had been both

hasty and cruel in his judgment against Tess. The following lines throw a flood of light on this changing conception of moral :

> "During this time of absence he had mentally aged a dozen years. What arrested him now as of value in life was less its beauty than its pathos. Having long discredited the old systems of mysticism, he now began to discredit the old appraisements of morality. He thought they wanted readjusting. Who was the moral man? Still more pertinently, who was the moral woman? The beauty or ugliness of a character lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses ; its true history lay, not among things done, but among things willed."

From this it is clear that the controversy around the sub-title is primarily a controversy of a girl breaking the accepted social pattern of behaviour. With the eyes of Victorian public Tess was guilty of breaking the social ideal of the chastity of a woman, and, therefore, Hardy, in their opinion, had no right to call her a pure woman. We will examine this issue in greater details just now.

Then there is the second aspect of the controversy. Besides examining the sub-title against the Victorian conception of morals, we have to examine it against the wider question of morality in human life. The question whether Tess is a pure woman or not can be properly answered only when we answer appropriately the question : Who is the moral woman? Now, there can be simply 'chastity of the body', without any 'chastity of the mind and the soul'. Thus a person may be chaste and pure in body, but thoroughly impure in mind and soul. The question is : Will he or she be called moral ? Then there is another type of person who may be just by chance impure in body, and yet pure in his mind and heart. Thus even after having lost his physical chastity he maintains the chastity of his mind and soul. Will it not be proper to call such a person a pure person ? H.G. Wells has distinguished these two types of persons by calling them '*prostitutes of the body*', *and* '*prostitutes of the mind and soul*'. In his opinion comparatively speaking, the prostitutes of the mind and soul are more than the prostitues of the

body. By way of example we can say that Alec was a prostitute of the mind and soul.

Thus the sub-title "Tess of the d'Urbervilles"—*a pure woman* has to be considered against two backgrounds : 1. Against the Victorian conception of moral. 2. Against the wider question of morality in human life. Let us examine "Tess" from these points of view.

Let us take the first. Considering "Tess" from the point of view of Victorian moral there is hardly any doubt that she is not pure woman. The Victorian Society could never accept the idea that a woman should be called pure even when she had been seduced while a virgin and had a child. There is no doubt that Tess was not responsible for this unfortunate incident in her life. She became guilty of 'this immoral act' only because of the irony of Fate. She was seduced at a time when she hardly moved what was happening to her. She appeals to Angel Clare to forgive her on these grounds :

> "What have I done—what have I done ' I have not told of anything that interferes with or belies my love for you. You don't think I planned it, do you ? It is in your own mind what you are angry at, Angel ; it is not in me. O, it is not in me, and I am not that deceitful woman you think me !"

But Angel Clare hardly understood the appeal of these words. Living under the Victorian skies he had the same narrow conception of morals. Hardy makes this point absolutely clear in these observations made about the character of Angel Clare :

> "But over them both there hung a deeper shade than the shade which Angel Clare perceived, namely, the shade of his own limitations. With all his attempted independence of judgment this advanced and well-meaning young man, a sample product of the last five-and twenty years, was yet the slave to custom and conventionality when surprised back into his early teachings. No prophet had told him, and he was not prophet enough to tell himself, that essentially this young wife of his was as deserving of the praise of

> King Lemuel as any other woman endowed with the same dislike of evil, her moral value having to be reckoned not by achievement but by tendency."

Thus Angel Clare was '*a sample product of the last five and twenty years*' ; he was yet '*the slave to custom and conventionality.*' With this background of traditional morals Angel Clare found it impossible to accept Tess as a pure woman. Later on when he was in Brazil, his outlook broadened and he grew away from traditional morality. For the first time he was capable of thinking in a wider context. To the query : Who was the moral woman ? he got the answer that the beauty of ugliness of a character lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses ; its true history lay, not amongst things done, but among things wild. Only in Brazil he could go so far in his ideas. Hardy wanted some such change in the mind and conceptions of the Victorian public. Clare could show the change under the Brazilian style, Hardy made the Victorian public think of the question by giving this challenging sub-title. He wanted to shock the Victorian public into recognition that the question of morals, particularly the question of a moral woman, was not to be decided in the light of narrow and limited morality and traditions.

Now, let us examine the question of Tess being a pure woman in the larger context of morality in human life. As has been pointed out above that a prosititute of the body is not so immoral as the prostitute of the mind and the soul, Tess was not at all guilty of the latter crime. She was the purest specimen of womankind in feelings and in the purity of her heart. She lost her physical chastity no doubt but it was all by accident.

> "Whatever her sins, they were not sins of intention, but of inadvertence, and why should she have been punished so persistently ?"

Yes, her sins were not sins of intention. Then, why should she be punished for a crime for which she was hardly responsible : Nobody could challenge the purity of her mind and heart. She loved Angel Clare with rare devotion ; and in spite of all the cruelties he heaped upon her, she continued to

be faithful to him. For the sake of true love she underwent all difficulites and sufferings. Could any woman be an example of such a great love? Tess remains a glorious example of that love which is the ultimate aim of human life. Therefore, had she not the right to be called a pure woman ? In this way look at from the larger point of view of morals in human life, Tess is a pure woman. Hardy is fully justified in calling her so.

In the end we can say that Tess is a pure woman for the following simple reasons. 1. She is an example of perfect love, and one who can love truly and sincerely 2. She is a pure woman because she is pure in her feelings, in her mind and in her heart. The purity of mind and heart does guarantee a person to be called pure. 3. Her title to be called a pure woman has been questioned only against the narrow background of Victorian morals. But there is no justification in questioning the purity of a woman by judging her against a narrow and limited conception of morality. 4. The beauty or ugliness of a character lies not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impuleses ; its true history lies, not among things done, but among things willed. From this point of view she is a pure woman. In her aims and impulses she is as pure as any person in the world.

Q. 2. *Nature herself is one of the characters in Hardy's best novels. Discuss with reference to "Tess".*

Or

Write a short note on Thomas Hardy as 'an interpreter of Nature.' Illustrate your answer from "Tess".

Ans. It goes without doubt that Hardy is deeply interested in Nature. Just as Wordsworth is the greatest poet of Nature, Hardy is the greatest interpreter of Nature in the field of fiction. Just as when a person reads one of the longer poems of Wordsworth, he feels he has spent a day in the country, in the midst of Nature. The same could be said of the Wessex novels. As one reads Hardy's novels, one feels that one is spending the time in the Wessex country-side. All the green life beneath the sky of South England lives in his pages. Even the titles of his novels point out Hardy's great love for Nature. The novels like "The Woodlanders",

"Under the Greenwood Tree", "Far From the Madding Crowd", clearly indicate how deeply and passionately Hardy thought of Nature. In fact it is one of the major contributions of Hardy to the English novels when he introduced Nature as a living presence in the English novel. In his hands Nature becomes almost as much a character as any other human being. It determines the course of the story and influences the lives of the characters. Like any other human being it has life; it feels; it speaks; it breathes and castes its own influence on the things around it. Take, for example, the case of Egdon Heath in the novel " The Return of the Native". No one who has read the novel can ever forget that astonishing first chapter where Egdon Heath is introduced to us. Egdon Heath is not merely a setting, a background against which the drama of certain lives takes place. It is a living presence which enters into the characters of Eustacia Vye and Mrs. Yeobright.

Here is a brief description of Egdon Heath :

> "A Saturday afternoon in November was approaching the time of twilight, and the vast track of unenclosed wild known as Egdon Heath, Embrowned itself moment by moment. Overhead the hollow stretch of whitish cloud shutting out the sky was a tent which had the whole heath for its floor."

Thus Egdon Heath is itself a character, and acts on human beings just as other human beings too. Without it all the characters in the novel would not have been what they are. These descriptions of Nature are plentiful in Hardy so much so that Duffin, a noted Hardy critic, says, "If word-pictures could be hung on walls, a great gallery could be filled with Hardy's Nature pieces."

And yet another thing to be noted about Hardy's treatment of Nature is that his descriptions of Nature are not impersonal. His description is not the description of a Biologist who would describe Nature from outside. In a majority of cases the natural scenery given to us in Hardy will be found to have an emotional connection with the events happening at that moment. It is precisely here that misunderstandings exist regarding Hardy's treatment of Nature. It is believed and pointed again and again that Hardy presents

Nature red in tooth and claw. This is too much to say, and a falsification of Hardy's understanding and treatment of Nature. There is absolutely no doubt that Hardy's landscape is much more ready to show sympathy with people in distress, but it does not mean that he is incapable of presenting Nature in its happier moods. This statement can be confirmed by illustrations from "Tess".

Nature in Hardy's novels exists in almost all possible moods. It is generous ; it is terrible and fierce ; it is indifferent and has no regard for punny human beings ; it is red in tooth and claw ; it is callous. In "The Return of the Native" we find Nature mostly indifferent to human lives ; it has hardly any regard for those who ignore it. And yet it should not be forgotten that even in "The Return of the Native" the characters like Diggory Venn and the rustics who live in accordance with Nature, live happily. So it is altogether wrong to say that Hardy's conception of Nature is just opposite to that of Wordsworth. No doubt, like Wordsworth he does not believe in the holy plan of Nature all the time ; but like Wordsworth he does believe that to live naturally is to be happy. In this respect his conception of Nature is complementary to Wordsworth's. But there is a limit to it in Hardy's novels. Just at the beginning of "Tess", Hardy comments :

> "Some people would like to know whence the poet whose philosophy is in these days deemed as profound, and trustworthy as his song is breezy and pure, gets his authority for speaking of 'Nature's holy plans'."

Thus Hardy criticizes the philosopher who speaks continuously of Nature's holy plans. And yet Hardy does not completely rule out the possibility of Nature being holy at times. This is clear from the role of Nature in "Tess" at the Talbothays dairy farm. Clare had fallen in love with Tess. And curiously enough Nature around the dairy farm helps both Clare and Tess to develop their personality and love. The lines given below from "Tess" prove the point :

> "Amid the oozing fatness and warm ferments of the Froom Vale, at a season when the rush of juices could almost be heard below the hiss of fertilization,

> it was impossible that the most fanciful love should not grow passionate. The ready bosoms existing there were impregnated by their surroundings."

Thus in those lovely natural surroundings their love grew passionate. The sentence 'The ready bosoms existing there were impregnated by their surroundings,' speaks volumes of the holy plan of Nature. Very often the air at Talbothays dairy farm was "balmy and clear". Again and again Hardy speaks of the good intentions of Nature in "Tess".

> "It was a typical summer evening in June, the atmosphere being in such delicate equilibrium and so transmissive that inanimate objects seemed endowed with two or three senses, if not five. There was no distinction between the near and the far, and an auditor felt close to everything within the horizon. The soudlessness impressed her as a positive entity rather than as the mere negation of noise. It was broken by the strumming of strings."

The next point that emerges, from the reading of "Tess" regarding Hardy's treatment of Nature is that Hardy can present Nature in its rich aspects as well. It is generally said that the land which appeals to him most is that which is free from human dwellings. He is attracted by the sober hills of his native district ; it is only the gloomy vastness of the moor in which every living being vanishes as if swallowed up in the depth of the century. One reading of "Tess" makes it clear -that these statements about Hardy's treatment of Nature are very sweeping ; they do not take into consideration the possibility that Hardy can describe Nature in its lush aspects ;

> "The outskirt of the garden in which Tess found herself had been left uncultivated for some years, and was now damp and rank with juicy grass which sent up mists of pollen at a touch ; and with tall blooming weeds emiting offensive smells-weeds whose red and yellow and purple hues formed a polychrome as dazzling as that of cultivated flowers. She went stealthily as a cat through this profusion of growth, gathering cuckoo-spittle on her skirts, cracking snails that were

> underfoot, staining her hand with thistle-milk and slugslime and rubbing off upon her naked arms sticky blights which, though snow-white on the apple tree trunks, made madder stains on her skin ; thus she drew quite near to Clare, still unobserved of him."

But at the same time Hardy does not forget the cruel and fierce aspects of Nature.

Thus the point to be noted as Cazamian points out, is "Hardy has most lovingly described the elementary, grand, and sad aspects of Nature.' In "Tess" we get all these aspects. Nature is grand as well as sad ; it is generous as well as fierce.

It should, however, be noted that Nature does not play so active a part in "Tess" as it plays in "The Far From the Madding Crowd", "The Mayor of Casterbridge" and "The Return of the Native". In these novels it is always a living presence, a character ; in "Tess" it quite often becomes a mere background. The reasons of which are obvious. In "Tess" as well as "Jude" Hardy is concerned more with social problems than with anything else. Along with the workings of Fate, he draws our attention to the unhealthy conventions of society. Through Tess he takes up the social problem of chastity in a woman's life. Through her character he argues that certain conventions in society have become outdated. They have become masters of human life instead of being the servants. As a result of which sorry state of affairs, injustice is done to innocent people. Tess suffers because society with its conventions was not prepared to accept her after she had been seduced. Angel Clare deserted her because he was the victim of the same social convention. In Brazil his outlook widened and for the first time he understood the correct meaning of the conception of a moral woman. Thus in the presence of the deeper social problem Nature goes into the background in novels like "Tess" and "Jude". And yet Nature lives in "Tess"; it is there in almost all its aspects, though it is not so active as it is in the earlier novels of Hardy.

Q. 3. *What part does chance play in the novel "Tess"? Illustrate your answer properly.*

Ans. In Hardy's novels chance plays a very important part. Quite often it appears that human beings in his world have no individual existence of their own ; they are controlled by chance happenings. The happiness and misery, joy and sorrow, are not there in the world of Hardy because of the actions and counteractions of the human beings present in his world; they are there because of some external power popularly called Fate. The interference of Fate in human life takes place in many ways. The one very common way in which Fate interferes in the lives of Hardy's characters is through chance. A struggle between the men on the one hand and, from the other, an omnipotent and indifferent Fate that is Hardy's interpretation of the human situation. The characters become so much the victims of chance that they appear as helpless :

'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods ;
They kill us for their sport.'

In the novels of no other writer does chance play such an important part in the lives of people. But here Hardy invites the criticism that he overindulges his delight in presenting 'the impishness of circumstances.' In order to present his poem powerfully he even violates probability and lets the chance happening to take place and determine the course of action. Moreover in the world of Hardy's novels it is 'the undesirable-unexpected' that happens. This aspect of Hardy's philosophy of chance also invites criticism. In life it is the unexpected that happens. Chance happenings do take place ; sometimes they determine the course of life for good, sometimes for bad. But rarely does it happen that chance events should leave to misery and unhappiness always. Why should it happen so in the world of Hardy ? Is it not a falsification of the picture of life ? These are some of the problems that raise themselves when we discuss the role of chance in the novels of Hardy. But to condemn his use of chance altogether is to misunderstand his view of life. When we read his novels, we are witnessing a battle between men and destiny. Destiny is an unknown force ; we do not know its nature or its intention.

And we cannot, therefore, predict what it will do. As a result of this, its acts always show themselves in the form of unexpected blows of chance. The world of his novels is by no means a world in which all things can be reduced to obvious law and explained by common sense. The strange, the unexpected, the inexplicable occur everywhere and always in the novels of Hardy. The method is used with a definite purpose, and is well rooted in Hardy's philosophy of life. Explaining it to his critics he says :

> "Strange conjunctions of circumstances, particularly those of a trivial everyday kind, are so frequent in an ordinary life that we grow used to their accountableness..."

Thus Hardy believes that chance does operate in life so often that its workings are ignored by an average man. He explains it away easily because he has grown use to it. But what Hardy does is to pinpoint our attention on these chance happenings so much that it appears that he is overindulging his delight in presenting them. In fact it is not so what are dismissed as chance events, to Hardy they are the very warp and woof of human existence. It is no use blaming Hardy for the excessive use of chance in his novels for by the nature of his theme it is essential to his world. There is however one point of criticism against him which is just. The point of criticism is—why is it that the undersirable, unexpected always happens? Here again it may be said that Hardy's melancholy view of life was mainly responsible for this bias in his novels.

"Tess" is the novel of character and yet chance and capricious fate play an unusually important part in deciding the happiness or unhappiness of Tess. Let us discuss the role of chance in "Tess" in greater details. The novel opens in a dramatic meeting between Jack Durbeyfield and Parson Tringham. It was just by chance that in tracing the history of the d'Urbervile family Parson Tringham had observed Durbeyfield's name on the waggon. He passed on this information to Jack Durbeyfield just by the way. Having told Jack Durbeyfield that he belonged to the ancient d'Urbeville family, the Parson wondered whether he had done the right

thing—"No, thank you—not this evening, Durbeyfiled. You've had enough already." Concluding thus the parson rode on his way, with doubts as to his discretion in retailing this curious bit of lore. This was just a matter of chance that in spite of having not much inclination the Parson gave the information to Jack Durbeyfiled. The information had a tremendous effect on his mind, and to a very great extent determined the course of the action of the novel. It gave glorious visions to Mrs. Joan Durbeyfield who almost compelled Tess to go to the d'Urberville mansion. But for this news Tess would not have gone there ; she would not have been seduced ; and the tragedy of her life would not have taken place. The little piece of news given by chance by the Parson led to the tragedy of Tess's life.

Again it was as a matter of chance that Jack Durbeyfield was so drunk on the night prior to his departure to Casterbridge that he could not go there next morning with the beehive. The result was that Tess along with Abraham had to go to Casterbridge. While on her way, her cart collided with the morning mail cart which had noiseless wheels. Her horse Prince died. In itself it was a little incidence which took place just like chance but it again had a great influence on the course of the action of the story. As a result of Prince's death Tess felt herself guilty. She thought that she should do something for the family income. All the time troubled by this thought she agreed to go to the d'Urberville's mansion. Here again it should be noted that chance had a big role to play in the tragedy of Tess. She would not have gone to the d'Urberville's mansion, had Parson Tringham "might have added, what he knew very well that the Stoke-d'Urbervilles were no more d'Urbervilles of the true tree than he was himself." Any way, the story does not end here. When Tess called at the d'Urberville mansion, she met none else but Alec d'Urberville :

> "Thus the thing began. Had she perceived this meeting's import she might have asked why she was doomed to be seen and coveted that day by the wrong man, and not by some other man the right and desired one in all respects—as nearly as humanity can supply the right and desired."

Thus it was a matter of chance that was seen and coveted that day by the wrong man, and not by some other man, the right person. This chance meeting with Alec turned the entire course of Tess's life. Alec had cast his evil eyes on her and made up his mind to use her for the purposes of his flesh. Tess as a result of womanly instinct, realized his intentions somewhat vaguely, but her mind was disturbed by the unfortunate death of the horse. She did not want to go to the d'Urberville's mansion, and "yet something seemed to quicken her to a determination ; possibly the thought that he had killed Prince." In this way it was again chance that compelled her to go to a place where she feared danger. Not only this, one wonders why she was met by a mean and sensuous person like Alec. It was again a matter of chance ; her destiny was taking her into the deep pit of tragedy. The novelist himself comments.

> "Why it was that upon this beautiful feminine tissue, sensitive as gossamer, and practically blank as snow as yet, there should have been traced such a coarse pattern as it was doomed to receive ; why so often the coarse appropriates the finer thus, the wrong man the woman, the wrong woman the man, mainly thousand years of analytical philosophy have failed to explain to our sense of order."

As we proceed with the story, we find that chance continues to operate in its mischievous manner. It carries Tess into deeper and deeper tragedy. After being seduced, when she returns home, it was just a matter of chance again that she met a person who was painting on the wall.

THY, DAMNATION, SLUMBERETH, NOT

These words were written there just as a matter of chance. But Tess found them very appropriate in her own case. She felt that the man had written those words only after having full knowledge of her unfortunate past life. The novelist comments :

> "But the words entered Tess with accusatory horror. It was as if this man had known her recent history ; yet he was a total stranger."

The result of all this was that Tess felt that her crime committed unknowingly was very great and she would not be forgiven. This made her life very miserable.

So far it must be noted that it is always the undesirable, unexpected that had happened in the novel. But at one stage in the novel the desirable unexpected also happens. It is just by chance that Angel Clare meets Izz while on his way to Brazil. He had already deserted Tess, and on seeing Izz he thought that he might take her with him and give up all idea of Tess. But all of a sudden he put a strange question to Izz :

> 'You love me very, very much, Izz ?' he suddenly asked. 'I do—I have said I do ! I loved you all the time we were at the dairy together.'
>
> 'More than Tess ?'
> She shook her head :
> 'No,' she murmured, 'not more than she.'
> 'How's that ?'

'Because nobody could love 'ee more than Tess did. She would have laid down her life for 'ee. I could do no more.' It was just by chance that Angel Clare met Izz who convinced him of the sincere love of Tess. The words "she would have laid down her life for 'ee. I could do no more", kept on ringing in the mind of Angel Clare even when he was miles away from Tess. These were the very words which in a way compelled him to come back to England and search for Tess. But the story does not end here.

Chance must operate once again in her life, but this time again in an undersirable manner. Clare does come back to England but by chance he gets late. And this very fact brought about the final tragedy of Tess's life. She met Alec at this moment under very difficult circumstances. He persuaded her to live with him. At this moment, when she had hardly any hope of Angel's coming back, Angel comes back and knocks at her door. But it was late. She turned away Angel Clare from her door. In a fit of anger she murdered Alec and ran after Angel Clare to join him for ever. But this time the law, the human law, came in her way. She was

sentenced to death on the charge of murder, and was hanged.

Perhaps the role of chance had been very unfortunate at the time when she wrote a letter of confession to Angel Clare giving him all the details of her past life. She did not want that Clare should marry her in ignorance without knowing her past. In order to say every thing about herself she wrote a letter to him while Angel Clare made love to her at the Talbothays dairy farm. Quietly she thrust the letter into his room but it was by chance that the letter slipped under the carpet and Angel Clare never got it. She discovered this fact on the wedding day itself, and there was no time to discuss her life with Clare that day.

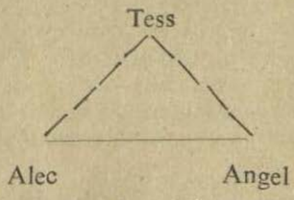
Thus, from the above account it is clear that chance determines the course of action of the novel "Tess" from beginning to end. But for two greatest unexpected blows of chance the tragedy of Tess could have been avoided. Instead of ending her life on the gallows, she would have lived a very happy life. But faith in the form of chance did not want it. Had the letter she wrote to Clare not slipped under the carpet the tragedy of her life would have been averted. Anyway if this had happened and they—Tess and Clare were married off the tragedy of their life could have been avoided later on had Clare come a little earlier from Brazil. The frequency of chance is so much in the novels of Hardy that he has come in for a lot of criticism on this account. Chance events come up everywhere. Chance acts in his novels without our seeing it. Hardy lets us see it every time. It is no use critisizing him for this. His method is quite deliberate and is well rooted in his philosophy.

Q. 4. *Write an es:ay on Hardy's art of plot construction with special reference to 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles.'*

Ans. Thomas Hardy is one of the greatest novelists of the present time. We know him as the skilful maker of plots. In his method of plot construction he follows Fielding. He builds the structure of his plot brick by brick and stone by stone like an expert mason. His training as an architect must have helped him in designing logical and symmetrical plots. But their beauty is often marred by accidental happenings.

Regarding Hardy's plots Neil in his book "A Short History of English Novel", has observed, "His plots are, for the most part, simple. The passions he depicted are the elemental one of love, greed, jealousy, ambition, the thirst for power and knowledge, and the springs of action that move his characters are psychological. In the course of his development as a novelist Hardy's interest shifts from the outer frame-work of experience to the inner world of feeling. His novels become moral dramas in which the conflicts of wills, impelled by passion, predominate. But these conflicts are not entirely determined from within, they are disturbed and complicated by the repeated workings of blind chance. Chance in its purely malevolent aspect is an important though invisible character in every Hardy's novel."

The favourite theme of Hardy is love round which his plots are built solidly. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is the only exception. But in all other novels the plot rises from the fact that two or more men love one woman, or two or more women love one man. The eternal triangle is always present in his novels. This triangle is very simple in 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles.' We can explain it by means of a simple figure :



Tess is loved by both Alec and Angel. The plot of Tess is superbly simple without any complexity in action. It suggests Hardy's mastery and control on the various elements of plot. But in other novels though the plot is simple, this triangle is comparatively complex. Cazamian observes, "His plots are not simple. They grow out of elementary passions: ambition, greed, love, jealousy and the thirst for knowledge; and the springs which move them are psychological. More and more as he progresses in his career Hardy tends to shift the construction of his novels to the inner world; he writes

a moral drama, shows us a conflict of contradictory wills, guided themselves by feelings. But the development of these conflicts is crossed at every moment by accidents which interrupt them. Ironical, malevolent, fatal chance is as it were an invisible third party in all the relationships of human beings; now it seems to express an obscure cruelty lurking in the universe now, in a more philsophical guise, it is the experimental revelation of laws which probability demands that they should be some day crushed. In this latter sense, chance becomes the chastisement of the unavoidable selfishness of every life. Whether one aspect or the other is prominent, the repeated working of the inimical luck is largely responsible for the tragic atmosphere which Hardy's heroes succeed but rarely in escaping."

Pointing out another weakness of Hardy, Allen remarks, " Hardy's chief weakness in plot arises from his view of causalty. He is intent to show that the stars in their courses fight against the aspiring, the man or woman who would rise above the common lot through greatness of spirit, of ambition, or of passion. Here his problem was difficult indeed, and it is not surprising he never solved it. For the universe itself to become suddenly hostile to man could only be shown through the working of what may be called the freak coincidence. It is silly to blame Hardy for the emphasis he places on coincidence ; simply, he believed in coincidence."

Another minor defect in Hardy is that he is not very inventive. He does not invent many types of plots. Most of his plots are based on one situation and that is love.

"But these failures in the management of his plots matter less in Hardy than they would in any other novelist ; they are botches, but they do not ruin the work, because though large enough when measured in terms of plot they are small when seen against the vastness and the strength of the design behind the plot. Plot in Hardy is his attempt to express the significance of the great design in purely human terms. Failure was almost inescapable for Hardy, as a man of his time and place, had no

completely adequate myth through which his view of the nature of things could be bodied forth"

In spite of these weaknesses Hardy remains a superb master of plots. His greatness in this sphere is unquestionable. A. C. Ward observes, "Though the 'architectural structure of his plots' may have been overemphasized, he certainly had the architect's ability to deal with massive structures. His best novels are built in grandeur, and he was truly impressive in his power to communicate the brooding spirit of great places—of Egdon, of Stonehenge, of the Vale of Blackmoor. His most memorable characters, also, are conceived on the grand scale. Though Tess is a broken peasant girl, she is immense in her power of endurance."

Q. 5. *Write a critical note on Hardy as a successful creator of female characters with special reference to "Tess of the d'Urbervilles."*

Ans. Regarding Hardy's female characters Lionel Johnson remarks, "Of the women, whose characters and fortunes are portrayed by Hardy most various opinions may be held. Some have that winning audacity, the charm of strength, which marks in diverse manners those gentle ladies, Captain Keellar, Sir Julius, and Count Von Rosen, the creations of other eminent hands; some are alternately 'cautelous' and 'temevarious,' old words of too exact a meaning to be lost: some have a distant likeness to Miss Austen's great characters; a likeness that takes us by surprise. Some almost incur from Dr. Johnson the charge of flirtation, since he defines a flirt to be, a pert young 'hussey' I cannot think that any one of them is so powerfully conceived and drawn, as are the best of Mr. Hardy's men: but more cleverness, more adroitness and dexterity of wit, more research, have gone to their portraits. An admiration of their versatility in maintaining their consistency, is the sentiment, which they provoke: an amazed awe of the infinite ingenuities, which their sincerity can devise for its protection. 'A very little wit,' wrote Swift, 'is valued in a woman, as we are pleased with a few words spoken plain by a parrot.' That is too often the dangerous and important view of women's wit entertained by Mr. Hardy's men with distressing consequences".

Generally Hardy has treated women with sympathy and kindness. They can be classified under five groups. First, there are full-length characters of high order like Tess, Sue, Eustacia, Bathsheba and Elizabeth Jane. The second group includes Elfride Swancourt, Grace and Anne Garland. The third group consists of women of less significance though they are fully studied. The women who form the fourth group though full of significance, are not sketchily drawn e.g. Fancy, Marty, Arabella Donn, Thomasin, Lucetta. etc. In the last come the women like Matilda, Fanny, Charlotte, Marian, Izz Huett, Retty Priddle, Mrs. Yeobright and Susan Henchard who are studied in the background.

Hardy's women display his great penetrating power and his great study of their psychology. They are even better than the male ones. But he was not a misogynist. Besides observing their physiognomy, he analyses their minds and hearts. He is a true lover of the fair sex. He presents them both from outside and from within.

Hardy seems to agree with Byron :

"Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,

'Tis woman's whole existance."

Love is their the all and be all. Love plays the most important role in Hardy's novels most of which are love-tragedies. It is their passion of love that makes them the instrument of fate. They love only to lose the game of life. Tess, Bathsheba, Elfride Swancourt, Anne Garland, Fancy, Grace, Eustacia Vye and Lucetta—all love and all of them are lost. Pierre D'Exidemil has observed, "Of one of his heroines Hardy says that her reason played with her imagination as a young cat plays with a dead bird. This inferiority explains the role of love in the existence of Hardy's women. This desire for admiration, which we behold in all of them indeed, but most highly developed in Fancy Day and Bathsheba Everdeene (two of Hardy's heroines from his novels) shows us that Nature herself acquaints them with the destined role of their charm and with the power which it wields, at the same time instructing them in its necessity. With them a special kind of sensibility is

always triumphant where as in the case of men intelligence tends to emancipate. But this very sensibility accords to love a wider role in woman's life."

They resemble Hardy at least in one respect that they have no faith in God. For them passion is more important than religion. They are controlled by sudden and constantly changing passions and surrender themselves to the men they love.

Hardy found complexity in women. In this connection a critic has observed, "Hardy is above all a painter of women. Nothing indeed is as rare as a writer capable of depicting with equal success the characters of sexes. Hardy does not handle masculine psychology with the same penetration. His male characters are either sensual or effiminate, or else victims of a kind of internal attraction. He doubtlessly discovered in a woman a complexity which remained more prominently before his eyes ; a submission to instinct which involved her in more intimate relations with the whole ordering of thing."

Hardy calls them the radiant daughters of nature. But he makes them suffer more than men. For example in 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles', Tess suffers more than any other chracter in the novel. It is only because she belongs to the weaker sex. Moreover she like other women of Hardy, is guided by her passions and falls a prey to the cruel fate. "Eustacia Vye, Lucetta Templeman, Arabella, all conjure forth from their desire the sensual whirlpool of love. One is conscious of their abdication before the master of their hearts and of their submission to the fleshly instinct and to every thing which must lead them to disaster. These are the passion driven among the women. But there are also Sue, who is almost lacking in sex, Elizabeth Jane, and the smiling group of girls who belong to two lovers, and many others who see coquettry and feminine refinement make charming creature of them, and whose misfortune it is to be condemned always to choose the inconstant or unworthy suitor and to turn aside from a warm and more certain affection. In their frank and native arborur of their passion the women in Hardy's gallery are only comparable to Shakes-

peare's women. All these women in Shakespeare closely resemble their sisters in the Wessex Novel, for their love is often a love that knows no limit, and is almost always born at first sight."

Hardy represents their minutest fluctuations of emotional experience and makes them real and actual. Rickett observes, "But if his best characters are not subtle and complex, the art that depicts his characters assuredly is ; for he can record the minutest fluctuations of emotional experience, and make them real and actual; it is this power which brings home to us with sureness the vital, full-blooded, and essentially fine-hearted Tess. I am not sure, however, that Eustacia Vye is not drawn with even greater power than Tess—for the philosopher obtrudes less often here than he does with the latter creation."

Cyril Aldered rightly remarks, that Hardy "excels above all in the portrayal of passionate, emotional types, chiefly women, who predominate in the novels. Yet he manages to balance them with restrained, self-controlled characters thus for a Henchard or Eustacia or Felice there is a Farfrae or Thomasin or Marty, even in his last work the contrast is marked between Jude's questioning hesitancy and Sue's impulsive certitude."

Q. 6. *What part does the philosophic party play in 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' ?*

Or

Write a note on Hardy's rustic characters with special reference to 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles.'

Or

Discuss the role of minor characters in the novels of Hardy with special reference to 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles.'

Ans. Broadly speaking Hardy's characters may be divided into three groups. First those who are protagonists of the whole human drama i.e. who take leading parts, secondly those who are in contact with them and have some part in their affairs, and lastly "the rustic bystanders ; who not only provide comic relief, but also fulfil a much more important func-

tion. Their services in making the machinery run smoothly and perspicuously are invaluable, and they also help to bring out not only the immediate but also the ulterior significance of all that is taking place. In a sense, they represent Hardy himself. They are quiet but deeply interested observers who see more of what is going on than the gentlefolks are aware, and they are continually dropping shrewd comments... ....they are soaked in tradition, the traditions of a primitive class, rooted in the soil, which it is their function to typify. They are as eternal as the woods and fields and heaths ; whereas the diffident lovers, the weak or faithless women, the anguished victims of despair, are symbols of a present phase of disturbance, restlessness, and maladjustment." (Baker)

The minor characters of Hardy have been given various terms. They are called 'the rustic chorus;' and 'the philosophic party'. The word chorus is used in its classical sense. In the Greek drama the function of the chorus was to give such information to the audience as was not otherwise available. The rustics in Hardy's novel often give an important information. They are called the philosophic party because sometimes their comments contain greater truth than the philosophy of many philosophers. They are sometimes called 'the rustic standards' as they only stand and watch without taking any active part in the novel.

These rustic characters were first of all introduced in the novel, "Under the Greenwood Tree." He made them a necessary part of the great tragedies that followed it. They have great importance in "Far From the Madding Crowd," in "The Mayor of Casterbridge" and in "The Return of the Native."But in his final works "Tess of d'Urbervilles" and "Jude the Obscure" they are more or less discarded. Though in his final works they are not present in plenty yet they play a significant role. In 'Tess" they appear in groups only three or four times. Hardy ignored these characters in "Tess" and "Jude" merely because he wanted to purify and simplify his style so that he might concentrate on the great social issues he proposed to discuss in these novels. In "Tess" they appear only at three places. We meet them for the first time in Tess's village, Marlott ; then we find them at Talbothay's dairy-farm.

Although they are rustics, they are not by any means unthinking. They are not merely designed as stage furniture. On the contrary they have their own logic. They fulfil an important function and render an invaluable service in working the machinery smoothly and well. Their world serves as a background to the tragic world of Thomas Hardy. They are full of the tradition of a primitive class, rooted in the soil. They are as eternal as the woods and fields and heaths.

The rustic chorus does not take any active part in the main action of the novel but are content with observing what is going on around them. Hence they are called 'rustic standards.' In fact they see more of what is going on than the gentlefolks know. In 'The Return of the Native' Diggory Venn is a regular spy watching over Thomasin's affairs.

These quiet observers sometime make comments which contain greater truth than the philosophy of many philosophers. At one place in "Tess" Hardy himself calls these rustics as 'philosophers'. He says, "*The chief pleasure of these philosophers lay in going every Saturday night, when work was done, to Chaseborough, a decade market town two or three miles distant.*" They are simple, honest village-folk who know things in their true colours. Their comments are full of truth and serve as a warning. We can illustrate it from *Tess*. When after the discovery that he has descended from the old knightly family of the d'Urbervilles, Jack is historic, both Jack and Joan Durbeyfield feel that Tess their pretty eldest daughter, has bright future. They are sitting in the Inn. They are surrounded by some rustics who observe them. One of them remarks, "*Tess is a fine figure O, fun, as I said to myself today when I saw her vamping round parish with the rest. But Joan Durbeyfield must mind that she don't get green malt in floor.*" It means that if Joan is not careful, Tess may find herself in trouble. We know how true the remark proves.

'The rustic chorus, as has been said above, serves the same purpose as was served by chorus in Greek dramas. They give us very important information which is not otherwise available to us. At one place in "Tess" their information proves to be of vital importance to the course of the ac-

tion of the novel. When Angel Clare being bitterly disappointed, runs away from Tess, he meets Izz by chance. She agrees to his proposal of taking her with him to Brazil. But he suddenly asks her, "You love me very, very much Izz?"

"I do—I have said I do ! I loved you all the time we were at the dairy together."

"More than Tess ?"

She shook her head.

"No", she murmured, "not more than she·"

"How's that ?"

"Because nobody could love'ee more than Tess did !...... She would have laid down her life for'ee. I could do no more." This remark totally changed his mind and he went to Brazil alone. During his stay in Brazil he hungered for the love of Tess.

Hardy appears to have agreed with Aristotle when we realise that humour often springs from these rustic characters. They provide rich humour from time to time. They provide comic relief. "Tess" is a serious novel dealing with the problems of chastity in women. There is little scope for humour. They sing and dance to make others happy. The May Dance in the Marlott village, their conversation at Talbothay's dairy-farm, render humour to the novel. When we see them, we feel relieved from the intensely tragic atmosphere of the novel.

"With the Wessex peasants, religion is little more than superstition : they practise Pagan rites as enthusiastically as they sing in the village choir. If they are conscious of any godhead it is as much the Earth, their Great Mother who increases their flocks and gushes from the cidar presses, as the Jehovah of the Old Testament. Their wisdom and happiness is age-long and inherited. Antaeus-like, they are strong with their parent Earth."

A great critic S. C. Chiew is of the opinion that they do not form a separate class. He says, "The peasants of Thomas Hardy do not form a class apart from the other characters in the Wessex Novels, for almost by imperceptible gradations the background or chorus of yokes is connected with the principal characters who are higher in the social scale. Hardy has

protested more than once against the city man's view of the undifferentiated 'Hodge.' In 'Tess' he remarks that these rustics are beings of many minds, beings infinite in difference, some happy, many serene, a few depressed one here or there bright even to genius, some stupid, others wanton, others austere? The importance of these people varies with the social state in which the several stories are set. In *Under the Green Wood Tree* we are in the midst of them, in *The Woodlanders* they play a great part, in *The Return of the Native* rather less; in *Far From the Madding Crowd* and still more in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* they serve rather as part of the background and as a sort of chorus that observes and comments upon events.

"The peasants and rustics are part of the landscape. They are thoroughly at ease in their world. They lead unspeculative lives close to Nature, never rebeling against circumstance. If they complain at all—and it is only the feeble among them that do so—it is usually of small physical ills of little moment. Hardy shows no concern for their social condition. Often he seems to be out of sympathy with the advance of so-called education, believing that the schools obliterate more of value than they give. He lays no stress on their poverty; in fact he declares that their misery has been much over estimated. It is the rustics in the Wessex novels, who are happy, for the secret of happiness, as is said in "The Woodlanders" lies in limiting the aspirations. They are quietists without being aware of the fact. Not that they are necessarily unintelligent. Many are shrewd, some witty, nearly all unconsciously humorous. The humour is merely an exaggeration touched with literary reminiscence and artistically justifiable, of qualities to be met within real life. Often of course, they are not so much humorous as the cause of humour in Hardy who juxtaposes their primitive manners and quaint conceits to the ideas and behaviour of more educated people. Their humour consists largely in comments upon the breed, general experiences of humanity; birth and courtship, and marriage, and death, and success or failure in enterprise. To a great degree it depends upon homely preventions of the sort of learning that, heard Sunday after Sunday, all their lives, has become part of themselves—the moral and devotional exhortations of their

clergymen, the more picturesque portions of the scriptures and the Prayer Book ("My Scripture manner which is my second nature" says one of the rustics) and the good old unsophisticate hymns the staves of which they lift with such goodwill."

Hardy's rustic characters may be compared with the minor characters of Shakespeare. In this connection Lord David Cecil observes, "Here Hardy is in the straight tradition from Shakespeare. These minor characters are the direct descendants of Bottom and Dogberry and the rustics who gather in response to Falstaff's call to arms at the house of Justice Shallow—'character parts' as they say on the stage, made up of a few strongly marked, deliberately caricatured personal idiosyncracies .....Like Shakespeare's, they can also stir serious emotion."

"Indeed, these characters—it is their most important function—are necessary to set Hardy's main and serious drama in perspective with human life as a whole. The chorus is the symbol of the great majority of humdrum mortals, who go on living through their uneventful day, whatever catastrophe may overtake the finer spirits placed among them. Henchard and Eustacia may love and suffer and die; but the rustics go on. It is they who bring the children to birth, dance at the wedding, mourn at the graveyard, and speak the epitaph over the tomb. They are eternal as the earth by which they live. And their very prosaicness anchors the story to reality. It gives the reader a standard of morality by which he can gauge the tremendous heights and depths to which the main characters rise and fall. In his last two big novels, *Tess* and *Jude*, he leaves them out. And they lose by it. We feel them to give a distorted picture of life, as his greatest works do not. Nor, for all that they are drawn in so stylished a convention, are these figures unreal. Taken individually, they may seem exaggerated but taken—as they are meant to be taken—in a corporate mass, they build up a picture of average mankind in its rural manifestation that is carved out of the bedrock of life."

Q. 7. '*Tess is more sinned against than sinning.*' *Comment.*

Ans. In Hardy's novel 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles' Tess, a

pure woman is made to suffer terribly. From the beginning to the end she suffers innumerable miseries. No doubt she has fallen but she should not be blamed for it. She falls a victim to the evil designs of Alec. It is done against her will. When she falls in love with Angel, she does not want to deceive him and tells him all about her past life in spite of her mother's serious instruction. When Angel deserts her she would ask, "Was once lost always lost really true of chastity ?" She might prove it false if she could veil bygones. She retains the purity of her heart and mind. Angel deserts her 'because of his weak standard of woman's morality'. But he is wrong. A man should be judged by his aims on the whole.

Tess is a pure woman. She goes to Trantridge only when she is compelled by her mother. She does not like it but she realises her responsibility and works as farmkeeper. Alec comes to take her from her home to Trantridge. On the way he kisses her against her will. After some days he pitilessly seduces her. After four months she returns home. In due course she gives birth to a baby. This is her only sin. But she cannot be blamed for it. She falls a helpless victim to her circumstances. What can a helpless woman do against the evil designs of a reckless youth. But she has been an unwilling sinner. She hates Alec and rejects his offers again and again. She comes back to him only when she is convinced by him that Angel will not return. But as soon as Angel comes to her, she stabs Alec to death.

Thus the only fault or sin she does is to accept Alec. But even here she is compelled by her circumstances. Her father has died. Alec has been helping her family and repeating his proposal. She writes to Angel again and again but gets no reply. Had Angel come a little earlier she would not have accepted Alec.

The most cruel treatment is meted out to her by Angel. She loves him and can sacrifice even her life for him. At first she tries to control her passion for him but when she fails to do so, she does not want to deceive him. She writes a letter to him clearly stating her affair with Alec but unfortunately Angel does not get it. When they are married, she tells him about it and begs for mercy. Angel turns a deaf

ear to her and deserts her. She thinks it her sacred duty to tell him all about her past life. When her mother reproaches her, she says, "If—if—it were to be done again—I should do the same. I could not—I dare not—so sin—against him." Her sincerity and devotedness to Angel is clear from what she writes to him, "I would be content, ay, glad, to live with you as your servant, if I may not as your wife; so that I could only be near you, and get glimpses of you, and think of you as mine."

But such a pure and noble woman knows no joy in her life. It seems that the cup of her life was filled with misery. Angel does great injustice to her. He deserts her although she is innocent. The punishment she gets is undeserved. She knows it well that Angel has passed a cruel sentence on her but like a faithful wife she obeys him. If Tess is impure and he is right in his judgment, why he wants to take Izz with him to Brazil. Decidedly he is at fault. Tess remains loyal to him to the last moment. She says, "My husband that was, is gone away, and never will love me any more; but I love him just the same, and hate all other men, and like to make them think scornfully of me!" But she pays. She is made a plaything by Fate. The invisible hands of Fate draw her to her tragic end. When she is hanged. Hardy says, "Justice was done, and the President of the Immortals, in Aschylean phrase, had ended his sport with Tess."

From the above account it becomes clear that Tess pays for no fault of hers. First she is innocent. Angel deserts her because he thinks that if a woman has lost her physical chastity, she is not pure. But as soon as his outlook is broadened, he realises his mistake and comes back to her. He blames himself for judging her so hastily and cruelly. Secondly, if at all any fault had been done by her, the punishment would not have been just. She is too sorely tried. She comes out pure. But it is too late. The woman fails to get any consolation in life. No one except Death shows mercy to her. Indeed, 'she is more sinned against than sinning.'

Q. 8. *What do you understand by the Irony of Fate? Illustrate your answer from "Tess".*

Or

What is the part played by Fate in bringing about the tragedy of Tess.

Ans. According to "The Advanced Learner's Dictionary" the irony of Fate would mean "an event or situation which is the direct opposite of what is, or might be, expected, and appearing to be directed by evil fate." In simple language the irony of Fate means some *undesirable-unexpected* which takes place in life because of an evil fate. In the novels of Hardy this irony of fate works repeatedly. It may be noted that the irony is not always a cruel irony in life. But in Hardy it is generally the cruel irony, and the expression "The irony of Fate" is mainly associated with the undesirable unexpected so when we discuss the role of irony and Fate in Hardy, we chiefly narrate incidence where fate becomes cruel to human life or lives. When we expect an event or situation to cause happiness, it just happens that the opposite result takes place as a result of the irony of fate. For example, the parents of Tess prevail upon her to go to the d'Urberville's poultry farm to claim kinship so that she might be married to a rich person. Thus the situation is this: Tess is sent to the d'Urberville's poultry farm with the high hope and expectation that she will marry a rich person and bring prosperity and glory to the whole family. But what is the irony of fate? The irony of fate consists in the fact that instead of marrying a rich person, Tess meets a scoundrel. He seduces her. A child is born to her so instead of bringing happiness to herself and to her family, she brings everlasting unhappiness and sorrow for herself and her family. This is how the irony of fate works in the novels of Hardy.

Now, this irony of fate can work in two ways. It can work from outside the characters, that is something external may happen. For example, the failure of the range causing great loss to Henchard, or the burning of the rick causing disaster to Bathsheba. Then the irony of fate can also work from within the character. It is just an irony of fate that in spite of every great quality Angel Clare did not have enough

of the animal in him......"Some might risk the odd paradox that with more animalism he would have been the nobler man." Indeed it was an irony of fate working within the character of Angel Clare that he loved Tess without possessing, as the novelist points out 'more animalism' in him. Similarly it is the irony of fate that Jude being the son of a stone mason should have intellectual aspirations and also a high degree of sensuousness. Both these qualities in his character did not work well for the happiness of his life. His intellectual aspiration made him dream of higher things; his sensuous nature brought him in contact with a girl who was to cause him all the unhappiness of life. In this way the irony of fate works from within the character. To repeat it once again the irony of fate in Hardy works from within as well as from without the character. In the novel "Tess" the irony of fate works in both these ways. In the case of "Tess" the irony of fate works from without. In other words, Tess's unhappiness is caused by external happenings over which he had hardly any control. For example, she wanted to reveal her past life to Angel Clare, and to that effect she wrote a letter to him. But by the irony of Fate, the letter slipped under the carpet. Clare could never know about her past and he married her. Again it was by the irony of fate that she reveald her part to Angel Clare immediately after their marriage. Once again the irony of fate works from outside in her case when Angel Clare comes back to England only a little late. In the case of Angel Clare the irony of fate works from within. He is a man with a very definite character. He believed in morals and wanted to be a preacher of mankind:

> "I am of course, a believer in good morals, Tess, as much as you. I used to wish to be a teacher of men, and it was a great disappointment to me when I found I could not enter the Church. I admired spotlessness, even though I could lay no claim to it, and hated impurity, as I hope I do now. Whatever one may think of plenary inspiration, one must heartily subscribe to these words of Paul: "Be thou an example - in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. It is the only safeguard for us poor human beings".

These lines indicate the true character of Angel Clare. It was the irony of fate that this man who wanted to be a teacher of men decided to take up farming. Even while he worked at the Talbothays dairy-farm, he could not give up this fundamental nature of his. He remained a doctrinaire idealist. It was this aspect of his character which brought about his separation from Tess. Thus, the irony of fate works from within him.

The operation of the irony of fate is frequent in Hardy. It works in almost all his novels. It is so because it is part of Hardy's philosophy. In Hardy's books man has to fight againat destiny. This destiny has been given various names ; Fate, Immanent Will, The President of Immortals, etc. In his own words it is "the purposive, unmotived, dominant thing which sways in brooding dark their wayfaring". In the hands of this "unmotived dominant thing" human beings are helpless :

'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods ;

Hardy presents this blind faith in various forms. Semetimes it appears as a natural force. Henchard's plans for making himself rich are brought to nothing by a bad harvest : the weather takes the part of fate here. Sometimes fate appears as some weakness of character. But fate in the novels of Hardy generally appears in two forms :

1. As chance and 2. As love.

Let us now study the operation of irony of fate in "Tess" in the form of chance and love. To begin with, the irony of fate takes place in "Tess" both in the form of love and chance. It was just a matter of chance that she met Alec at Mr. d'Urberville's poultry farm. It was a matter of irony of fate that Alec got fascination for her ; a wrong man pretended to love a woman who was never meant for him. Here is the irony of fate in the form of chance :

> "Thus the thing began. Had she perceived this meeting's import she might have asked why she was doomed to be seen and covetd that day by the wrong man, and not by some other man, the right and desired one in all respects—as nearly as humanity can

> supply the right and desired ; yet to him who amongst her acquaintance might have approximated to this kind, she was but a transient impression, half forgotton."

And here is the irony of fate in the form of love which should not have been there :

> "In the ill-judged execution of the well-judged plan of things the call seldom produces the comer, the man to love rarely coincides with the hour for loving. Nature does not often say 'See' to her poor creature at a time when seeing can lead to happy doing ; or reply 'Here' to a body's cry of 'where?' till the hide-and-seek has become an irksome, outworn game."

Then the irony of fate in the form of chance and love continues to work throughout the novel, and determine the very course of Tess's life. It was again the irony of fate in the form of chance that Tess had to go to Casterbridge with the beehives. On her way to Casterbridge the horse Prince died. In itself it was a minor event. But it had unusually unfortunate result on the life of Tess. When she was hesitating to take up the job at d'Urbervilles' poultry farm because of Alec, the irony of fate worked itself :

> "Something seemed to quicken her to a determination ; possibly the thought that she had killed Prince. She suddenly stepped up ; he mounted beside her, and immediately whipped on the horse."

It was once again the irony of fate that she fell into the clutches of Alec when she had the least idea of it. She fell out with her companions while on her way back to Trantridge from Chaseborough. In order to escape their scorn and bitter remarks, she agreed to ride back on the horse of Alec. It was the most cruel irony of fate that while she was running away from some with whom she had fallen out, she fell into the track of one whom she hated almost. And she was seduced. Again and again the irony of fate operates in the form of chance. At a very crucial moment in her life, her letter of confession slipped under the carpet. On another crucial occasion, on a Sunday morning, Tess walked

fifteen miles to the house of the old Mr. Clare as a last step to seek settlement with Angel Clare. But there was no answer to her ring at the door, for the family was at church. As has been pointed out above, in all these cases the irony of fate works itself in the form of chance from outside the character. Tess is in no way responsible for all these unfortunate chance happenings. When she returned from Mr. Clare's house, she met Alec after very long time just at the most wrong time in her life. As soon as he saw her again, his old passion for her revived. While there was yet some chance for Tess to meet Angel Clare, the letter she sent to Brazil was delayed, and Angel reached home only a few days late. On all these occasions, the irony of fate thwarted the happiness that would have been hers.

We have already noted how the irony of fate works in "Tess" from within the character. Angel Clare was mostly a victim of the irony of fate from within. When he was penitential mood in Brazil, he began to wonder whether he was right in deserting Tess. Under the Brazilian sky he was partly cured of his inherent defect of character and the result was self regrets :

> ". . . . . . and he had asked himself why he had not judged Tess constructively rather than biographically, by the will rather than by the deed?"

Thus, if Tess's happiness was destroyed by external happenings, Angel Clare's own character was mainly responsible for his disaster in life. But in both cases it was the irony of fate which was ultimately responsible for the tragedy of their lives.

From the above account it is clear that the irony of fate operates throughout the novel. Moreover, it operates in the form of **undesirable-unexpected.** And it is in this respect that the critics say that Hardy overindulges his delight in presenting 'the impishness of circumstance'. "Tess", a novel of character, if ever there was one, may yet stand as an example of the part played in human life by a capricious and malign fate. And yet so convincing is the narrater's art, so intensely conceived are the situations, that it is impossible to feel other than that this is precisely how things

would have happened. Thus, the criticism that Hardy over-indulges his delight in the irony of fate in a novel like "Tess" has no justification.

Q. 9. *"Hardy's pessimism is always elevating and seldom depressing." Discuss this statement with special reference to "Tess".*

Ans. Hardy has come to be regarded as a pessimistic philosopher. But this view has certain very serious limitations which should be clearly borne in mind. In the first place, no philosopher can be called either optimistic or pessimistic. Optimism or pessimism is a trait of temperament. It is entirely a subjective quality. An optimist always looks at the bright side of things and finds hope against hope, whereas a pessimist always looks through the dark glasses and never sees any ray of hope; his vision is clouded; his views are partial. Hence, these kinds are absolutely unfit for philosophic reflection, which requires a dispassionate, impartial and unclouded view of things, and seeks to discover an explanation of life in all its implications. Literally philosophy means 'love of knowledge' and therefore a philosopher has to give a comprehensive explanation, first of the relation of man with Nature, secondly, of the relation of man with the highest power in the universe and the thirdly, of the ultimate relation between Nature and this highest power. As Hardy shows a natural inclination towards pessimism, he is unfit to be philosopher, although people have taken great pains to prove him one because of the influence he received from his study of the natural philosophers of his age. However, here we have to consider only the pessimism of Hardy and the real value of this quality in the novels that he wrote.

Hardy had been from the beginning of his life a weak and sensitive personality. He never enjoyed a sound and happy physique. He had to make his headway in a world which was highly complex and bitter. He had ambitions but could not realize them. Soon disgusted with the work of an architect, he came to literature with his ripe experience of life. He had seen life from the closest quarters. The problems of life that were becoming increasingly complex were known to him as the first principles. His experience of life around him coupled with his study of classical literature

showed him that there is always in life. more to be endured than to be enjoyed. Hence every novel of Hardy paints a world of unrelieved gloom and darkness where people suffer for no mistakes of their own. Sometimes, it is society that crushes and ruins them by the weight of its age-old customs and conventions; sometimes Nature turns out their enemy and assuming various froms and expressions devastates their crops and shatters their lives ; sometimes it is Fate that through instrumentality of chance upsetsthe balance and destroys the innocent loving creatures of Wessex ; sometimes there is the onrush of modern civilization born of scientific inventions, which disturbs the harmony and tears into pieces the otherwise happy life of the inhabitants of this region. Often the clash is too much for the sufferers who have to face it boldly and die heroically. This spectacle of underserved sorrow and suffering, and the inevitable death of persons who have sterling qualities of character and personality makes the reader for some time very sad and sombre. The impression left on his mind is one of helplessness and hopelessness.

Sometimes Hardy tried to perform the role of a 'melionist'. He wrote "as a melionist (not a pessimist by the way), I think better of the world". But this was a mere whim—a passing weakness. Hardy was always deeply concernd with the "plight of being alive". He mostly shoved things getting worse. He had no hope, no belief that 'good shall be the ultimate goal of ill'. However one thing is certain and it is this that pessimism is not always so unreasonable as it appears. Hardy has said that "the highest fights of the pen are mostly the excursions and revelation of souls unreconciled to life". It is in this assertion that we get the real clue to a correct interpretation of his pessimism. It is not a destruction of life, a negative existence, or outcry against it. Hardy places tragic literature on a very lofty place by saying that he has addressed "some of these novels of Wessen life, more especially to readers into whose souls iron has entered"- Often his novels possess qualities which are the very opposite of consolatory. But this is perhaps because the function of tragedy had not been understood by the time he wrote his novels. In those days katharsis was found to be a very effective means. The awakening of pity and terror was essen-

tial factor, Hence in the tragedies of Hardy the idea of tragic waste is always present. We feel that something very valuable has been lost. High hopes are set on his heroes who promise fully well, but all these hopes and expectations are shattered along with their death. And it is not their unmitigated suffering and unrelieved gloom which impress us most. We know that the odds are heavy and beyond human power to subdue, and the fight which these heroes put up against them is definitely sublime and ennobling.

When we take the example of "Tess", we find the statement absolutely correct. There is very great disaster in the life of Tess. The sense of disaster is all the more great in this novel because right from the beginning we develop a very keen interest in and love for Tess. When she is introduced in the novel she captures our imagination as a result of her lovely look and independent nature. When the novelist describes her in the beginning, he says :

> "Phases of her childhood lurked in her aspect still. As she walked along to-day, for all her bouncing handsome womanliness, you could sometimes see her twelfth year in her cheeks, or her ninth sparkling from her eyes ; and even her fifth would flit over the curves of her mouth now and then."

From this point onwards she becomes our object of affection. With great interest and anxiety we follow the course of her life. Her parents prevail upon her to get a job as poultry girl on the farm of the old lady Mrs. d'Urberville. She meets here a handsome but unprincipled young scoundrel Alec. The result is a brief romance, disillusionment and a child. The child soon dies. But even at this stage her experiences of life have been very tragic. Angel Clare was surprised that "She was expressing in her own native phrases—assisted a little by her sixth standard training—feelings which might almost have been called those of the age—the ache of modernism." It is sometime before she finds the courage to face the world again. She accepts a job as a dairy maid on the Talbothays farm. Here she makes acquaintance with Angel Clare. The two are drawn closely together. When Angel declares his love, Tess, in spite of her best wishes, fails to reveal her

past life to him. And yet she spends some of the best period of her life at the farm. In spite of the happiness she gets, she has doubts about her continued happiness. Such is the nature of pessimism in Hardy. Even brief periods of happiness are doubted by those who enjoy them.

> "I don't quite feel easy, she said to herself. 'All this good fortune may be scourged out of me afterwards by a lot of ill. That 's how Heaven mostly does. I wish I could have had common banns."

And this proves true. Her happiness does not last long. She is ultimately hanged. The result is there is a feeling of some depression in the reader's that even such a lovely person as Tess should die for no fault of hers.

And yet the pessimism of the novel is not depressing. In spite of her tragic experiences, she dies with a certain happiness.

> 'What is it, Angel?' she said, starting up. Have, they come for me?'
>
> 'Yes, dearest,' he said. 'They have come.'
>
> 'It is as it should be,' she murmured. 'Angel, I am almost glad—yes, glad. The happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have had enough ; and now I shall not live for you to despise me'.

Thus irrespective of all sorrow and unhappiness, all sufferings and cruelties, Tess dies with a feeling of happiness. 'Angel, I am almost glad—yes glad.' So there is still hope for happiness in Hardy's world although Tess supposed that we live on a star that is a blighted one. In conclusion we can say that Hardy did not set out to give us a pessimistic philosophy which was to depress us. He did show how certain persons, selected because they were interesting, having certain character, would behave under certain circumstances. In painting their role in life he is prone to weigh the chances against their prosperity by too many coincidences. But we are not shocked by the end of his tragic novels. On the contrary we are greately moved by the behaviour of the persons and the sublimity of the scene. Destiny may seem pitiless and cruel, but the nobility of the characters in facing it with courage

and sympathy towards one another evokes a compensating admiration. Thus as Scott-James, a noted Hardy critic points out 'Hardy is pessimistic about the governance of the universe, but not about human beings.' We get this very impression after having read Tess. The same feeling is evoked by almost every tragic novel of Hardy. In this way there is hardly any exaggeration in saying that Hardy's pessimism is always elevating and seldom depressing. It elevates us as regards the great values of human life. Throughout in his world he has the highest respect for the Christian virtues—fidelity, compassion, humility. These virtues might be of no avail in the universe ; they might be called only to strive and suffer and be defeated. All the same, Hardy ranged himself under their banner. According to David Cecil, "He was one of the most Christian spirits that ever lived. In this way his pessimism is always elevating, for tragedy in his novels takes place for higher values."

Q. 10. *Is Hardy a realist or an idealist ? Discuss.*

Ans. Realism in English fiction came with Defoe who in his novels, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Modd Flanders* created a tremendous illusion of reality. The eighteenth century novelists, particularly Fielding, gave a new theory of fiction namely that a novel is a comic epic poem in prose. Realism was made by Fielding the greatest characteristic of a novel. In all his novels, particularly, in *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews* he gave a real and faithful account of the contemporary English life. After Fielding realism and romanticism walked hand in hand. It was only in the hands of Dickens that realism flourished most powerfully. In the hands of Thomas Hardy again, realism became a great force. Let us now discuss the element of realism as it is observed in the novels of Hardy.

The series of novels written by Hardy are known by the name of Wessex novels. All these novels are a faithful presentation of the life of this district of England. The local colour is an expression of realism. Hardy has so realistically painted the men and women, villages and towns, fields and markets, rivers and roads, valleys and forests, animals and birds, trees and plants that many of the readers of his novels

have been led to find and see their originals in the country. In fact, all these descriptions are imaginary but the illusion of reality is so powerfully created that they all appear to be highly convincing. Hardy says that a certain lady of Scotland came to him and said that he had given in the character of Farfrae the image of her husband whereas Hardy had never seen him. The same is known to have happened about the creation of Tess. The wife of Hardy gives a very striking account of the sensitive temperament of her husband. He had a remarkably accurate observation. That is one of the reasons why he succeeded so largely in producing in his novels characters of flesh and blood. In a very few words Hardy paints his characters and we can easily distinguish the one from the other. All of them have their own strongly developed personalities. Tess, Jude, Henchard, Oak, Bathsheba, Eustacia, Yeobright are examples of his realistic creation.

The greatest expression of Hardy's realism is found in the portrayal of his low characters. It appears that Hardy is happiest in the company of these rustics. He knows them most intimately, their manners, their appearances, their motives and their actions. He knows that they are orthodox, conventional, superstitious, drunkards, gamblers and given to easy ways of life. He does not caricature these characters nor does he idealize them but presents them, both men and women exactly as they are.

The plots of Hardy except a few situations and events where the novelist has been taken away by his prejudices and poetic fancy, are all realistic. All of them deal with country life the knowledge of which Hardy possessed in plenty. It is only in the description of complex town-life where he is not successful. His love stories are perfectly compact. They are convincing and realistic. Every novel demonstrates the closely knit character of Hardy's plots, the manner in which events follow one another in an inevitable sequence of cause and effect.

The theme of Hardy's novels is always realistic. Hardy knew the effect of modern civilization on rural life. All his novels remarkably show this clash. The various problems

that have arisen in the sphere of social life have been quite honestly studied and presented. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* has the problem of labour and capitalism beautifully presented. Farfrae is capitalist whose commerce is based upon the use of up-to-date machines and latest business techniques. By dint of his sound tact and tricks, he becomes the richest man of the town and Henchard who still lingers on his old and unscientific methods of commerce cannot compete with him. Farfrae is a typical modern capitalist who is unfeeling and unsparing. He reduces the wages of his labourers and takes hard work from them. This problem of labour and capital conflict which is gravely confronting our modern social life, has been very realistically handled by Hardy. Wealth brings power to Farfrae and this in turn best women also. He is fortunate to marry first Lucetta and then Elizabeth. In short, he enjoys his life as a modren capitalist does. The same problem is found in *Far from the Madding Crowd* where Oak, the labourer bleeds and Bathsheba the land-lady feeds. She has enough pride of wealth to reject the faithful lover who helps her in fire and water, and marries a soldier who is nothing less than a wealthy and brilliant rogue. It is only the misfortunes of her later life that teach her the proper lesson and bring her round to marry Oak.

In *Tess* and *Jude*, excepting a few minor defects, Hardy has handled his material in a manner which is perfectly real and true to experience. What happens to Tess has happened to so many girls in life. There is nothing improbable or unconvincing about what she thinks, feels or does. The conflict between her moral character and social conventions is quite natural. In *Jude* the problem is real and Hardy's treatment thereof is also realistic. It was but natural for Jude to have met the end of his life in the way in which he did. Who can by challenging social customs and conventions gain happiness and peace of mind?

However, the most convincing expression of Hardy's realism is found in his treatment of nature. He has neither spiritualized nature like Wordsworth, nor idealised it like Shalley. He has found nature as it is, more than often, indifferent to human life. Nature seldom cares to see

whether its effects and influences make man happy or unhappy. It has its own ways and moods, and works according to its own fixed mechanical laws. Furthermore, Hardy's descriptlons of the different phases of nature, gentle as well as fierce, are astonishingly realistic in their tone. There is more truth and accuracy of account than can be found in the work of any poet or prose-writer of nature. Hardy was passionatety in love with Nature, but without being sentimental or superstitious about it. Some of his readers have attempted to locate his natural descriptions and have succeded in this respect to a large measure.

In his attitude towards marriage and sex relations Hardy appears before us as a semi-realistic thinker. He holds that marriage is an ideal affair not to be based on mere physical considerations or bound by rigid social conventions. It is a spiritual union of two willing souls and no external force should be allowed to interfere in the formation of this sacred tie. Love should mature into marriage through gradual stages of courtship – a period during which the lovers should have the full liberty of understanding each other's outlook and abilities, and of fitting themselves in each other's mould as perfectly as possible. Hasty and unequal marriages always result in misery and frustration, as it is shown in the opening scene of *The Mayor of Casterbrigde*. It is in this respect that we find Hardy soaring on an idealistic plane. He dreams of an ideal marriage, a perfect spiritual union, which is the fruit of a long-continued courtship forgetting that even in those modernized groups of human society where courtship is a natural stage prior to marriage (for example, in most of the Western countries where there is enough of social and personal liberty lovers have the chance of courting and wooing before they are joined in holy wedlock), happiness and harmony of the couple are not guaranteed. It is a matter of chance that we get partners of our liking and thereby make our domestic life happy and peaceful. True love is not sought, but found. But Hardy forgets this fact when he speaks of lovers' efforts at courtship. He forgets that :

> "Society, friendship and love (are)
> Divinely bestowed upon man."

Despite this, Hardy is a realist as well as a social rebel who discards the long-standing notion of a woman's physical chastity. He supports widows's remarriage and declares that the loss of physical chastity is not invariably the loss of spiritual purity. Chastity and purity, he thinks, are spiritual possessions. And if a woman can maintain her purity morally, she is definitely 'a woman of pure character' as it is shown in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. With regard to divorce also Hardy's views are modern and progressive. Without being orthodox he recommends this remedy in extreme cases where the life of the couple has become altogether unendurable.

The charge of idealism is levelled against Hardy generally because in his novels we come across an amount of suffering, gloom and frustration, which is hard to match with the conditions of the actual world. The life we live is not always an unending series of failures and disappointments, it has its occasional periods of sunshine and success also. Truly speaking, human life is a mixture, a blending of good and evil, success and failure, tears and laughter. But Hardy concentrates mostly on one side of the picture and overlooks the other. He forgets laughter and remembers only tears. He paints a world which is enveloped by unmitigated gloom and darkness with no ray of hope, no light of faith. Even the little humour which his rustic characters provide is of a very grim and sardonic nature. It flashes across the dark horizon of his world like swift strokes of lightening, suggesting thunder and devastation, rather than like silver lines, inspiring hope and happiness. The characters in this world are placed in such situations and circumstances that they are deliberately made to appear puny and puppet-like in the face of a relentless irony of Fate. The plot is so arranged and the events so designed and invented that they but shorten the hopes and ambitions of the characters and bring unthinkable doom and destruction on their innocent lives. Mostly Hardy's novels are love-stories but as Lascelles Abercrombie points out, "the love intrigues of Hardy's stories seem to be consciously invented as though the novelist wished to prove that there could never be any happy ending to a love-affair." Priestley also holds that tragedy in Hardy is mostly 'false and forced.' But here we should not forget that Hardy's

business was not merely to describe things as they are, as a historian or a scientist does, but to give his own vision of life, sincerely perceived and artistically rendered. He had his own temperament and personality, experiences and associations, which moulded his outlook on life and which gave a typically individual colour to his works. Hardy was a realist in the sense that his views had the force of personal wisdom and insight and that they were expressed with perfect fidelity and sincerity in an unbroken series of his novels and short stories. He gave in his works, not a mechanical photograph of things, men and manners, he came across in life, for no artist does that, but a lively and speaking picture which was a real work of literary art. But the imaginative atmosphere in which Hardy writes these things does not diminish their substantial reality. Hardy's world is never dream-like or phantasmal. His feet are always on the earth. Hardy said that highest art was that which, though changing the appearance of what it describes, only does so in order the better to bring out its essential reality. He himself had this kind of art. In his bold union of bold fantasy and fundamental truth, idealism and realism, he is unique among English novelist. In the words of David Cecil, "Hardy's most extravagant flowers of fantasy are firmly rooted in the common soil of human life."

———

CHAPTER XXIX

3—CHARACTERS SKETCHES

TESS DURBEYFIELD

Tess is the heroine of the novel 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles'. She is one of the loveliest and most loveable heroines in English literature. In her beauty, grace, dignity, innocence, purity, devotion, sincerity, patience, capacity to suffer and endure, she can only be compared with the best heroines of Shakespeare. As the title of the novel suggests, she is the central figure in the novel round whom the entire story revolves. Among Hardy's women, she claims attention first, not only by reason of popularity, but more especially in that her creator distinguishes her by the appellation of 'a pure woman'. Indeed, she is as moral as any woman in the world. She is the eldest child of the Durbeyfields who were the descendants of the old knightly family of the d'Urbervilles. Her parents did not share the old glory of the d'Urberville family : her father merely a haggler. So in the novel Tess is introduced to us as the daughter of a haggler who had little sense of responsibility and mostly lived recklessly and carelessly.

Her bewitching beauty, youthfulness and freshness. The first thing that attracts attention towards Tess is her bewitching beauty. Describing her beauty to his parents, Clare very correctly points out. "She's brim full of poetry—actualized poetry if I may use the expression. She lives what paper poets only write." She has 'deep and speaking' eyes, fair cheeks, arched brows, shapely throat and chin. As for her mouth, "he (Clare) had seen nothing to equal on the face of the earth". Her upper lip had a little lift in the middle and to a young man with the least fire in him that "red top lip was distracting, infatuating, maddening." Her lips and teeth could be compared to roses filled with snow. Clare had never before seen a woman's lips and

teeth which forced upon his mind with such persistent iteration the old Elizabethan simile of roses filled with snow. She has a strange tenderness in her voice. She spoke so melodiously that Angel said that she possessed a 'fluty voice'. Even when suffering and more suffering had entered her life, she possessed "flower-like mouth and large tender eyes." In the beginning of the novel, the novelist describes her as possessing an "oval face of a handsome young woman with deep dark eyes and long heavy clinging tresses", "The teeth more regular, the red lips thinner than is usual in a country-bred girl". Living in the lap of nature and moving about freely, she had a full growth. As the novelist puts it. "It was a luxuriance of aspect, a fulness of growth, which made her appear more of a woman than she really was." Paying rich tributes to her beauty Alec said, "you can hold your own for beauty against any woman of these parts, gentle or simple ; I say it to you as a practical man and well-wisher". Even after all the sufferings, child-birth, work under odd conditions, she retained "her pretty face and shapely figure". When Alec saw her after a long time, he was once again infatuated by her physical charm—"surely there never was such a maddening mouth since Eve's !" On another occasion, Alec told her, "Tess, don't look at me so—I cannot stand your looks ! There never were such eyes, surely, before Christianity or since !"

Besides this physical charm, Tess possesses a higher beauty—the beauty of the pure soul. The purity of the soul was reflected on her face even after her seduction by Alec. Alec could spoil her physical chastity, but her chastity of soul could not be tarnished. When she entered the Talbothays dairy-farm, Angel Clare remarked, 'what a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature that milkmaid is !'

Her devotion to family. She is very devoted to her family, her parents, sisters and brothers alike. She cannot tolerate their sufferings and does everything in her power to help them. When she was working at Flintcomb-Ash farm, she received a note from her mother that the thatch of the house required renewal urgently. New rafters and a new ceiling upstairs were also urgently necessary. She had

demanded a sum of twenty pounds. Tess had thirty pounds coming to her almost immediately from Angels' bankers and as soon as the sum was received, she sent the twenty as requested. On another occasion when 'Liza Lu brought the news that mother was ill, she was very much agitated. It was imperative that she should go home. Without losing any time she started right at night on a fifteen miles' walk. Such was her concern for her mother. On reaching home she looked after her mother with great care. To her great disappointment she found that her sisters and brothers had not been properly fed and looked after and "the necessity of applying herself heart and soul to their needs took her out of her own cares."

Simple country-girl with her share of superstitions. When Clare saw her for the first time at Talbothays dairy-farm, he was struck by her simplicity and found her 'a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature.' It was her simplicity which made her suffer in life. Even when Alec had seduced her, she could not become clever in the ways of the world. Just before her marriage her mother wrote to her that she should not say anything to Angel about her past life. Out of simplicity she told everything to Angel just after her marriage and she had to suffer for it throughout her life. Then like all the cottagers in Blackmoor Vale, "Tess was steeped in fancies and prefigurative superstitions." Just after her marriage when they were about to leave Talbothays farm, there was the crowing of a cock. "I don't want to hear him'! said Tess to her husband. "Tell the man to drive on. Good-bye, good-bye!".

Highly sentimental. She is a highly emotional and sentimental person. At one place the novelist describes her as "a vessel of emotions rather than reasons." One can have some idea of her sentimental nature from this little incident. When Clare deserted her, he gave her a sum of fifty pounds, out of which twenty-five pounds she gave to her mother. The remaining sum began to run out as she could get no regular employment because of wet weather. She could not bear to let the sovereigns go. The reason : 'Angel had put them into her hand, had obtained them bright and new from his bank for her; his touch had consecrated them to souvenirs

of himself.' So the very money given by Angel had been consecrated for her and to spend them was "like giving away relics." Another example. After stabbing Alec to death, Tess joined Clare and they moved on and on. After covering many miles they found shelter in an empty building. At the time of her departure from it, she said, "Ah, happy house—good-bye !"

Her religion. She would go to Church no doubt, but her religion was not the religion of Christian dogma. It was a larger and more enlightened religion of humanity and loving-kindness. Once Alec said to her, 'you seem to have no religion—perhaps owing to me.' 'But I have. Though I don't believe in anything supernatural', she said. She despised Alec for all his pretensions to religion after his conversion. In her opinion to put on clerical robes and preach was no religion. 'Then do you think that the line I take is all wrong ?' asked Alec. 'A good deal of it', Tess replied. 'I believe in the *spirit* of the Sermon on the Mount, and so did my dear husband......" Thus, she believed in the 'spirit' of religion rather than in dogma, on another occasion she told Alec, "Why, you can have the religion of loving-kindness and purity at least, if you can't have—what do you call it—dogma".

Passionate and Sincere in her love. The one most outstanding quality of her character is that she is very passionate in her love in her own way, and very sincere. Hardly any woman could be so sincere in her love. Let what come, she could not be false towards her lover. She did not like Alec, and she had no hesitation in saying so. She loved Angel, and she stuck to him to the end of her life. She suffered humiliation, untold sufferings, every kind of privation, yet she could not be insincere to Angel. While Angel was on his way to Brazil, he asked Izz, 'you love me very, very much Izz ?' 'I do—I have said I do ! I loved you all the time we were at the dairy together !' 'More than Tess ?' She shook her head, 'No', she murmured,' not more than she'. How's that'. 'Because nobody could lov'ee more than Tess did !... ...she would have laid down her life for'ee. I could do no more'. Thus, she could have laid down her life for Angel, and she really did. She stabbed Alec to death because he

had dishonoured her husband, used foul words for him : "He heard me crying about you, and he bitterly taunted me, and called you by a foul name ; and then I did it. My heart could not bear it". This is passionate and sincere love speaking. Her sincerity in love is of the highest order. Even before marrying Angel, it was her most sincere and strongest desire to tell him all about her so that she could not be accused of hiding anything from him. It was a great misfortune that the letter slipped under the carpet and Angel could not know her past before marriage. In spite of her mother's command not to reveal her past to him, she did it because she felt it to be her duty in love. When her mother reproached her for doing so, she said boldly, "If—if—it were to be done again—I should do the same. I could not —I dare not—so sin—against him". In her letter to him she wrote, 'But I do not value my good looks ; I only like to have because they belong to you'. Her devotedness to her husband and her sincerity are absolutely clear from these words which she wrote from her heart : 'I would be content, ay, glad, to live with you as your servant, if I may not as your wife ; so that I could only be near you, and get glimpses of you, and think of you as mine'.

Her modesty and humility. Another very important aspect of Tess's character is that she is very modest and full of humility. She is self-respecting ; she has a sense of dignity, but she is not proud and vain. When the horse Prince dies, she puts all blame upon herself. After having been seduced, she feels she is polluting the very surroundings about her. 'Walking among the sleeping birds in the hedges, watching the skipping rabbits on a moonlit warren, or standing under a pheasant-laden bough, she looked upon herself as a figure of guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence. It was out of modesty that she thought so. She was as pure as anythings in nature. He sense of humility is very great in her love for Clare. Clare deserts her; he does her injustice; and yet she never blames him. Having undergone all sorts of difficulties and privations on account of him, she even then writes to him, 'The punishment you have measured out to me is deserved. I do know that—well deserved—and you are right and just to be angry with me. But, Angel, please,

please, not to be just—only a little kind to me, even if I do not deserve it, and come to me !'

Her love of melody. She is fond of music. She inherited the quality from her mother. "That innate love of melody, which she had inherited from her ballad-siging mother, gave the simplest music a power over her which could well-nigh drag her heart out of her bosom at times." She had her own favourite chants. She thought how strange and god-like was a composer's power, who from the grave could lead through sequences of emotion, which he alone had felt at first, a girl like her who never heard of his name, and never would have a clue to his personality. She had her favourite ditties too and sang them quite often.

Kind, loving and humane. She is very kind, loving and humane. Though as a result of her very tragic experiences iron had entered her soul and she could stab Alec to death, yet as she says "formerly I never could bear to hurt a fly or a worm, and the sight of a bird in a cage used often to make me cry." Then there is a very great example of her humane nature when she killed some wounded birds out of kindness. Once when she took shelter in a plantation after having escaped the evil designs of an evil man, she saw several pheasant-birds writhing in agony. With the impulse of a soul who could feel for kindred sufferers as much as for herself, Tess's first thought was to put the still living birds out of their torture, and to this end with her own hands she broke the necks of as many as she could find ..' And then she exclaimed, 'Poor darlings—to suppose myself the most miserable being on earth in the sight o' such misery as yours !' only a very kind and tender heart could feel so.

Her great powers of endurance and suffering. Tess has remarkable powers of eudurance and suffering. Hardly a woman could suffer so much and maintain her moral fibre. Her tale of misery begins from the day Alec seduces her. She comes home and a baby is born to her. She is a social outcast. And yet she puts up with the shame heroically. She works in the fields and suffers humiliation. Then her child dies without being given a Christian burial. Her suffering then was intense. Realizing her responsibility to-

wards the family, she sets out in search of a job and reaches Talbothay's dairy-farm. Here she spends some happy time though she suffered from mantal conflict. She marries Clare and her miseries increase. He deserts her and she wanders from pillar to post in search of employment. She has to suffer all sorts of insults. And yet she endures. For her young age she has learnt too well "of the dust and ashes of things, of the cruelty of lust and the fragility of love." The result was that she developed a calm fortitude towards life—"Patience, that blending of moral courage with physical timidity, was now no longer a minor feature in Mrs. Angel Clare; and it sustained her."

Her dignified bearing. She is simple girl born in poor family, but she has a very high sense of dignity. Her whole bearing is dignified. When Clare went to his home to tell his parents all about her, he said, "She is not what in common parlance is called a lady, for she is a cottager's daughter, as I am proud to say. But she is a lady, nevertheless—in feeling and nature". On another occasion when Angel was in an accusing mood, he said, 'you almost make me say you are an unapprehending peasant woman, who have never been initiated into the proportions of social things'. To this she replied, 'I am only a peasant by position, not by nature!' And she is right. This estimate of Tess is confirmed by Dairyman Mr Crick, "She's too for a dairymaid—I said so the very first day I saw her—and prize for any man ; and what's more, wonderful woman for a gentleman—farmer's wife".

Her self-sacrficing spirit. She is full of the spirit of self-sacrifice. In fact, her whole life is a tale of self-sacrifice. Since the day she came of age she began sacrificing her own happiness for the sake of her own family. She had once fifty pounds and yet she would part with twenty-five to make her parents comfortable. She walked all night to reach home to look after her mother. Her spirit of self-sacrifice is the greatest in her love towards Clare. She can sacrifice anything for him. Though her case is morally strong, yet she is prepared to do anything for Clare. 'No, I shan't do anything, unless you order me to ; and if you go away from me I shall not follow' ee; and if you never speak to me any

more I shall not ask why, unless you tell me I may'. On another occasion she is prepared to put an end to her life for the sake of Clare's happiness, 'what were you thinking of doing?' he inquired. 'Of putting an end to myself', she said. At the end she does sacrifice her life for the sake of her love.

A pure woman. Finally, she is a pure woman, as Hardy calls her in the sub-title of the novel. The question of her being a pure woman is slightly debatable. For an orthodox moralist, a woman who has lost her chastity is no longer a pure one. But when we examine the question a little carefully, on a higher plane of morality, we find that Tess is as pure as any pure woman in the wórld. Even Clare, when deserted her on grounds of conventional morality, knew it instinctively that she was pure in spite of the sorry incident in her life. 'She is spotless!' Clare replied, when his mother asked him about her, and he felt that if it had sent him to internal hell there and then he would have told that lie. What appeared to him a lie then became the truth in Brazil. When faced with the realities of life, he asked himself the question; who was the moral woman? By way of an answer he felt that the beauty or ugliness of a character lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses; its true history lay, not among things done, but among things willed. From this point of view, Tess is a pure woman. In fact, real purity consists in the purity of heart. And she is pure at heart, nobody can doubt. Hence, she is a pure woman.

So, these are some of the salient features of the character of Tess. But there is one thing more which is to be noted about her character. She is not a static character. She changes from one phase to another phase of her life, so sensitive she is. She remains constant in her love no doubt, but her experiences change and the quality of her life also changes. When she was a maiden, she was full of youthful vitality and gaiety. When she is seduced by Alec, her world changes : she changes. This change is described by Hardy in these words : 'Almost at a leap Tess thus changed from simple girl to complex woman. Symbols of reflectiveness passed into her face, and a note of tragedy at times into her voice !' And yet 'the turbulent experiences of the last

year or two had quite failed to demoralize her.' She continued to be a pure woman, consistent in love and believing firmly in the higher values of life.

ANGEL CLARE

After Tess, Angel Clare is the next important character in the novel. After his brief appearance in the first phase of the novel, when he did not dance with Tess, he reappears in the third phase at the Talbothays dairy-farm. From now owards the main interest of the novel is the tender love between Tess and Angel Clare. To begin with, he loves Tess tenderly and passionately ; the days the two spent at the Talbothays, are described with rare poetic charm by Hardy. During the third phase of the novel entitled 'The *Rally*' and also the fourth entitled 'The Consequence,' we see Clare at his best. He is the idol of many hearts ; Mr. Crick and Mrs. Crick pay due respect to him ; in short he appears to be a person without blemish—a perfect soul alive in the world. But soon we get another picture of Clare's character. He deserts his wife, one of the noblest women in English literature. She begs for mercy, pleads for forgiveness, but he remains stony-hearted. Then there is the last phase of his character. He leaves England for Brazil to become a big farmer. Life there does not suit him. But away from England he could think broadly and beyond the narrow conceptions of morality that he cherished. Gradually, he realised that he was wrong ; he had done cruelty against Tess ; character lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses, not among things done but among things willed. So we find Clare penitent. He comes back from Brazil. His heart burns to meet Tess. He sets out in search of her. After some difficulty he meets her but she is in a position where she finds it very difficult to welcome him back. Disappointed, he turns back from her door, his heart full of sorrow and repentance. But soon he is joined by Tess who has come running to join him after stabbing Alec to death. Angel Clare is once again all love ; "Tenderness was absolutely dominant in Clare at last." So these are the phases in which we see Clare. Below are discussed in detail some of the individual qualities of his character.

His Personality. He is twenty-six years of age. He has deep, thoughtful eyes, and 'a mobility of mouth somewhat too small and delicately lined for a man's'. He has an unexpectedly firm close of the lower lip. There is a certain degree of determination in him. "Nevertheless, something nebulous, preoccupied, vague, in his bearing and regard, marked him as one who probably had no very definite aim or concern about his material future." In other words there is a certain touch of the philosopher and the thinker in him, and he seems to be hardly worried about his material future, "yet as a lad people had said of him that he was one who might do anything if he tried." When he appears for the first time in the novel, we get the impression that he is gay and sportive. When he finds a number of girls dancing among themselves, he feels amused. In spite of being a stranger, he enters the green where they were dancing and gives good company to them. He is decidedly handsome. Marian, Retty, Izz all lost their hearts to him.

His wide reading tastes. Among his brothers, he does not have any University degree. Because of the religious differences with his father he was not sent up for University education. And yet he has real taste for reading, and he reads widely. He spent years and years in desultory studies, undertakings, and meditations. And he reads all types of books. His father was shocked when he received by mistake a book ordered by Angel. The book dealt with a system of philosophy which did not square with his father's religious views. 'Look into this book, my boy,' he said. 'What do you know about it ?' 'I ordered it,' said, Angel simply. 'What for ?' 'To read.' The shocked father said. 'How can you think of reading it ?' Even at the dairy, far away from scholarly atmosphere, he maintains his zest for reading. Living up in the attic at Talbothays dairy-farm, he played upon an old harp and "at first he lived up entirely, reading a good deal." Even while he sat in Mrs. Crick's dining room, he would read "from some book, periodical, or piece of music just come by post."

His sincerity in religion. Clare does not believe in holding a religious belief just because it is held by everyone. His father wanted him to take Orders and join the Church,

but from within he was not convinced of its practices. "Since you have alluded to the matter, father, I should like to say, once for all, that I should prefer not to take Orders. I fear I could not conscientiously do so. I love the Church as one loves a parent. I shall always have the warmest affection for her. There is no institution for whose history I have a deeper administration ; but I cannot honestly be ordained her minister, as my brothers are, while she refuses to liberate her mind from an untenable redemptive theolatory." His brothers had been ordained ministers, yet Angel was "the most appreciative humanist the most ideal religionist, even the best-versed Christologist." To the rigid dogma of the Church he preferred "sermons in stones to sermons in churches and chapels on fine summer days."

A sensitive person. Angel is a sensitive person. When his father told him that it was no use his mother and him economizing, if he was not going to take Orders. His father decided not to send him for University education. "Perhaps if Angel had persevered he might have gone to Cambridge like his brothers . but perseverance began to the sensitive son akin to an intent to misappropriate a trust, and wrong the pious heads of the household." In simple words it means that he decided not to injure the feeling of his parents by going in for the University degree and not to take Orders. He felt he had no right to do so.

Angel also shows great sensitiveness when he makes love to Tess at the dairy-farm. He would not kiss her without her permission. Quite a few times he felt like doing so but he desisted from the course. Only after Tess's disclosure that Alec had seduced her by accident, he becomes stony-hearted. But in Brazil his sensitive nature makes him feel the cruelty he had done towards Tess, and the result is that he comes back in search of her. He repents and at the time of Tess's hanging goes to the place of her captivity with 'Liza Lu where, along with her, he "bent down to the earth, as if in prayer, and remained thus a long time, absolutely motionless".

His dislike of town life. He has real dislike of town life. Once he was in London, he had a very unfortunate exprience.

While he lived in London, he was carried off his head and nearly entrapped by a woman much older than himself. In fact, as the novelist points out, "Early association with country solitudes had bred in him an unconquerable, and almost unreasonable aversion to modern town life." The outdoor life had a very good influence on him. At Talbothays, living in the midst of nature, he grew away from old associations, and saw something new in life and humanity. He would watch the phenomena of nature closely—the seasons in their woods, morning and evening, night and noon, winds in their different tempers, trees, waters and mists, shades and silences, and the voice of inanimate things. The novelist tells us, "Unexpectedly he (Clare) began to like the outdoor life for its own sake, and for what it brought, apart from his bearing on his own proposed career. Considering his position he became wonderfully free from the chronic melancholy which is taking hold of the civilized races with the decline of life in a beneficent power." So from this it is clear that he has great love for country life. As he lived among the dairy-folk he began to love those simple souls.

His love of music. He is fond of music. He would play upon an old harp in his spare time. Even at breakfast table he indulged in this hobby. "One day, however, when he had been conning one of his music-scores, and by force of imagination was hearing the tune in his head, he lapsed into listlessness, and the music-sheet rolled to the hearth." He was not very good at the harp. "To speak absolutely, both instrument and execution were poor, but the relative is all."

His passion for Tess. He has great passion for Tess. He loves her both tenderly and passionately. Tess's chambermaids bear testimony to it. 'Because he likes Tess Durbeyfield best', said Marian. lowering her voice. 'I have watched him every day, and have found it out.' The novelist also points out, "It was for herself that he loved Tess ; her soul, her heart, her substance—not for her skill in the dairy, her aptness as his scholar, and certainly not for her simple formal faith-professions". On one occasion while he was with her at an inn, a stranger had the rudeness to make some remarks at her. The insult to her stung him to the quick, and before he had considered anything at all he struck the man on

the chin with the full force of his fist, sending him staggering backwards into the passage. While he wooed her at the dairy he showed on many occasions his deep passion for Tess. 'Tell me, tell me !' he said, passionately clasping her, in forgetfulness of his curdy hands : 'do tell me that you won't belong to any-body but me !'

His inconsistency in love. In spite of all this passion, "his had been a love 'which alters when it alteration finds'." At the first storm his love for Tess cooled off. On her revelation that she had seduced by Alec, he goes mad with the idea. When Tess said, "I thought Angel, that you loved me—me, my very self", he replied'

'I repeat, the woman I have been loving is not you.'
'But who?'

'Another woman in your shape'.

He says all this even when he knows that she is more sinned against than sinning. And he deserts her.

His double standards of morality. Clare himself is guilty of an immoral act. In spite of himself he was entrapped by a woman older than himself, and led a life of a dissolute for forty-eight hours. He escaped, but he had been guilty of the same moral crime of which Tess became a victim. And yet he could not bear the idea of Tess losing her virginity. He says to Tess, "My position—is this. I thought—any man would have thought—that by giving up all ambition to win a wife with social standing, with fortune, with knowledge of the world, I should secure rustic innocence as surely as I should secure pink cheeks". But here he was mistaken. He did secure 'rustic innocence'. He was simply looking for physical chastity which unfortunately had been violated in Tess's case. But then, the question is : Was he himself physically pure? Had he not led a dissolute life for however brief period it might be?' And if Tess could forgive him, could he not forgive her? His double standards of morality one for man and another for woman, blinded him from seeing the situation dispassionately. He deserted a woman who was as pure as any being in the world.

His thoughtful, reflective nature. It can be said to be

both virtue and defect of his character that he was thoughtful, reflective and had a tendency towards dry reasoning. In fact, this tendency of his character proved more of a defect and brought unhappiness to his life. "Some might risk the odd paradox that with more animalism he would have been the nobler man''. The result of his tendency was that he grew etheral in his love towards Tess imaginative to impracticability. Instead of loving Tess the person, he began to love the image of some pure Tess. Because of the picture in his mind of some 'ideal' he could not drop the defects of the real. As the novelist points out, "The figurative phrase was tone : she was another woman than the one who had excited his desire". On another occasion the novelist points out. "He (Angel) loved her dearly, though perhaps rather ideally and fancifully than with the impassioned thoroughness of her feeling for him". So the point is that if Tess loved him with "impassioned thoroughness of feeling", he loved her "ideally and fancifully". When his ideal was broken on Tess's giving him the unfortunate information, his love altered. Besides this tendency to love "ideally and fancifully," he had the habit of arguing out things on the basis of certain doctrines which he held dear. He was a 'doctrinaire idealist'. It again led to disaster. "Within the remote depths of his constitution, so gentle and affectionate as he was in general, there lay hidden a hard logical deposit, like a vein of metal in a soft loan......It had blocked his acceptance of the Church ; it blocked his acceptance of Tess."

If this thoughtful and reflective nature in him was responsible for his estrangement with Tess, it was also responsible for his repentance and later on reunion with her, though for a brief time. While he was in Brazil, he thought over the situation—'His silent self-generated regrets were far bitterer than the reproaches which his wife rendered audiable.' He asked himself: Who was the moral man? Still more pertinently, who was the moral woman? In answer he realized that the beauty or ugliness of a character lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses; its true history lay, not among things done, but among things willed. With ever greater sorrow, he felt he had been hasty in his judgment of Tess. He craved to meet her again.

Respectful of his parents. He has both intellectual and religious differences with his parents, and yet he is highly respectful of them. He knew his parents were pious and simple and whatever they did, they did out of faith. He was denied University education because old Mr. Clare believed it was no use having a University degree if it was not used to enhance the glory of God. He accepts the situation without complaint. Even in the matter of marriage he was prepared to respect their wishes as mush as possible. "For though legally at liberty to do as he chose, and though their daughter in-law's qualifications could make no practical difference to their lives, in the probability of her living far away from them, he wished for affection's sake not to wound their sentiment in the most important decision of his life." On another occasion when his father told him that he had to suffer insult publicity in his mission to save bad souls, Angel felt deeply unhappy and said, "Dear father, I wish you would not expose yourself to such gratuitious pain from scounderls !"

His liberation and mental maturity. At the end of the novel we find a changed Angel Clare. He had not changed superficially as Alec had charged ; he had changed from within. While he was in Brazil "he had mentally aged a dozen years, what arrested him now as of value in life was less its beauty than its pathos. Having long discredited the old systems of mysticism, he now began to discredit the old appraisements of morality." In other words, he turned away from his limited outlook and morals, and began to see life in proper perspective. He realized the morals he had been following were narrow and limited. He asked himself why he had not judged Tess constructively rather than biographically, by the will rather than by the deed. Thus, he was liberated from his mental limitations.

From the discussion above, it is clear that Angel Clare's character arouses mixed feelings of condemnation and admiration in our hearts. When he loves Tess at Talbothays dairy-farm, we are all admiration and praise for him. He loves her tenderly and passionately. He is very respectful of her person. He is loved and respected by everyone at the dairy-farm and we, as readers, share the same feeling. But

when he deserts Tess, he arouses condemnation in our hearts. He applies double standards of morality. He himself is guilty of moral lapse, and yet he would not forgive Tess for something for which she was not responsible. But again at the end of the novel, Angel Clare wins our respect and admiration, though not completely. He repents for his mistake and accuses himself for the cruelty he did against Tess. When she is hanged, he stands outside the place of her captivity and hanging, and then bent himself down, as if in prayer, and remained thus a long time, absolutely motionless. Only a really noble soul could do this. Hence, the final judgment about Clare's character is : he was a noble soul who was betrayed by his own nature ; with the little more of an animal in him, he would have done better in life.

ALEC D'URBERVILLE

Alec D'uberville's full name is Alexander d'Urberville. In short, he is known as Alec. In the novel he is generally referred to as Alec. He does not belong to the genuine d'Urber-villa Stoke. His father old Mr. Simon Stoke had made enough money as an honest merchant, and decided to settle as a countyman in the South of England. He didn't want to be identified with the smart tradesman of the past, so he decided to annex some name of old dead families to his own. He found 'd'Urberville' very useful and accordingly it was annexed to his own name for himself and his heirs eternally. Thus, Alec did not belong to the real d'Urberville blood.

His appearance. Alec is a tall young man of twenty-three or four years of age. His complexion is swarthy. He has big, full lips, badly moulded, though red and smooth. He wears a well-groomed black moustache with curled points. From his very appearance it is clear that he has touches of babarism about him. And yet he has certain appeal which is mainly sensuous. The novelist points out, "Despite the touches of barbarism in his contours there was a singular force in the gentleman's face, and in his bold rolling eye." He is the only son of late Mr. Simon Stoke. He is given to smoking.

His cleverness. He is unusually clever. When Tess

calls at his house to see Mrs. d'Urberville, Alec meets her first. In this very first meeting he understands that here is a possible victim of his passions. In his first meeting with her he does everything to give her confidence and remove her fear. 'And so, my pretty girl, you've come on a friendly visit to us, as relations?' Then he addresses her as 'my pretty coz'. Tess wanted to make her visit short but he was pressing. He took her about the lawns, and flower-bed, and conservatories; and then to the fruit-garden and green houses, where he asked her if she liked strawberries. When she was about to go, he inclined his face towards her as if to kiss—but no. He thought better of it, and let her go. Thus, by these clever moves he tried to win her for his selfish purposes.

A reckless gallant. It is not for the first time that he behaves like a reckless gallant towards Tess. In fact, he is a confirmed rogue in this respect. In the past he spoiled many an innocent girl. His "reputation as a reckless gallant and heart-breaker was beginning to spread beyond the immediate boundaries of Trantridge." He does wrong to Tess and does not feel his responsibility and guilt in it. He could not feel the pain and suffering that he had caused to a sensitive spirit. He thought Tess was like any other course spirit. When Tess said to him, "I didn't understand your meaning till it was too late," he simply replied. "That's what every woman says." Deeply hurt by these words Tess cried "How can you dare to use such words." To this he light-heartedly said, "Very well, I am sorry to wound you. I did wrong—I admit it. Only you needn't be so everlastingly flinging it in my face. I am ready to pay to the uttermost farthing. You know you need not work in the fields or the dairies again. You know you may clothe yourself with the best, instead of in the bald plain way you have lately affected as if you couldn't get a ribbon more than you earn." These words express the height of his meanness and recklessness. He feels that the purity and chastity of a woman could be paid back by giving her good clothes. Few characters in Hardy are so despisable as Alec.

His superficial conversions. The honest parson old Mr.

Clare brought about Alec's conversion. He began to preach and appeared a very sincere convert. Telling his past to his audience, he said, "He had been the greatest of sinners. He had scoffed; he had wantonly associated with the reckless and the lewd. But a day of awakening had come, and, in a human sense, it had been brought about mainly by the influence of a certain clergyman, whom he had at first grossly insulted; but whose parting words had sunk into his heart, and had remained there, till by the grace of Heaven they had worked this change in him, and made him what they saw him." And soon after hearing these words, we see how superficial was his conversion. When Tess saw him in this converted state, she began to compare his face in the past with his face now. There was no much difference. "There was the same handsome unpleasantness of mien" about him. And there was 'a grim incongruity in the march of these solemn words of Scripture out of such a mouth'. Speaking of his conversion the novelist says, "It was less a reform than a transfiguration. The former curves of sensuousness were now modulated to lines of devotional passion. The lip-shapes that had meant seductiveness were now made to express supplication; the glow on the cheek that yesterday could be translated as riotousness was evangelized today into the splendour of pious rhetoric; animalism had become fanaticism." But his very features were to meant for all this. Their very elevation was a misapplication. This became clear as soon as he saw Tess. His old passion revived. He began to pursue her once again for the purposes of his flesh—"duty and desire ran hand-in-hand." No wonder he soon gave up preaching; desire won victory.

His passion for Tess. In the beginning when he seduced Tess, he had no attachment for her. He considered her a mere plaything for his animal desires. But later on, when he met her after his conversion, he developed great attachment for her. But it was all a sensuous desire. His love and passion for her is of the earth earthy. When he speaks of his passion for her, he always speaks in purely sensuous terms. Tess's shapely figure and lovely mouth alone seem to attract him. He cannot think in higher terms. He says to Tess, 'And why then have you tempted me? I was

firm as a man could be till I saw those eyes and that mouth again—surely there never was such a maddening mouth since Eve's !' He could never understand love could be nobler, that man could rise above senses and sensuousness. Again and again he speaks in voluptuous terms, "You temptress, Tess ; you dear damned witch of Babylon—I could not resist you as soon as I met you again."

A mean and contemptible person. Few characters in the novel of Hardy are so mean and contemptible as Alec. The way he seduces Tess arouses in us permanent hatred for him. At one stage in the argument he accuses Tess of having no moral sense of right or wrong. 'But has not a sense of what is morally right and proper any weight with you?' He says could there be greater meanness? A thoroughly immoral man has the courage to charge a pure woman with no sense of morality. His meanness is at its worst when he tries to entice Tess the second time by promising to offer help to her family. He could not win her by love, and then he adopted mean ways. He repeatedly touched her in a weak place. Her circumstances were very bad ; she, out of sheer hopelessness, fell a victim to his ways. When Angel Clare returns, she realizes the high degree of Alec's meanness. Her words throw full light on his mean character. "And then my dear, dear husband came home to me...and I did not know it ! And you had used your cruel persuasion upon me you did not stop using it—no—you did not stop ! My little sisters and brothers and my mother's needs—they were the things you moved me by...and you said my husband would never come back—never ; and you taunted me...And at last I believed you and gave way !...O, you have torn my life all to pieces—made me be what I prayed you in pity not to make me be again !" The soul-touching words confirm our hatred for Alec.

A sensuous person. He is a highly sensuous person. The only thing that he aims at in life is sensuous gratification. After his religious conversion, he meets Tess and says, "My religious mania, or whatever it was, is over. But I retain a little good nature ; I hope I do." How hollow these words sound from his mouth. In spite of all claim, he has no good nature left in him. Because immediately after saying these

words, he shows his meanness in these words, "I have enough and more than enough to put you out of anxiety, both for yourself and your parents and sisters." In fact, goodness is alien to his nature. He knows one thing and that is how to gratify his senses. Even after all the show of penitence and religious preaching, he retains his sensual nature. Tess is nothing to him except an object for the gratification of his senses.

From the above account, it is clear that Alec is a mean and contemptible character. He is one of the very few characters in Hardy who remain mean from first to the last. When the novel opens we meet him and develop positive hatred for him the way he seduces Tess. Then for the time being it appears that he is a reformed character. But the illusion does not last long. Soon he shows himself up in his true colours. There is hardly any regret in the hearts of the readers of Hardy when Tess stabs him to death. One only wishes he should have been killed by Providence itself for all his doings.

UNIVERSITY QUESTIONS

1. Tess is a "two fold polemic—against social prejudice and against the President of the Immortals" Discuss. (P. U. Previous 1964)

2. Comment on the sub-title of *Tess*: "A Pure Woman." (P. U. Previous 1964)

3. "Heredity in Hardy is as important as Fate and may even be identified with it at times." Comment on the above statement with special reference to *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. (Old P. U. 1964)

4. "Nature herself is one of the characters in Hardy's best novels" Discuss with reference to *The Return of the Native*. (Old P. U. 1964)

5. "The Fate above us, not the fate working through us—that is what is eminent and memorable in Hardy's novels. Discuss and illustrate. (Old P. U. 1964)

6. "The people whom he (Hardy) sets before us are beautiful and erroneous and self-defeated, and what they themselves do not contribute to their own unhappiness is contributed by the pretty spirit of chance" Discuss and illustrate from *The Return of the Native*. (Old P. U. 1965)

7. *The Return of the Native* is the book of Egdon Heath ; Without Egdon it will not hold together. Egdon influences all the human characters, moving them to love or hate, to despair or to philosophic mind." Discuss. (Old P. U. 1965)

8. Discuss Hardy's "pessimism" (P. U. Previous 1965)

9. Discuss Hardy's characters as "strong-willed souls." (P. U. Previous 1965)

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Thomas Hardy ... ... D. Duffin
2. The History of the English Novel Vol. VII ... ... E. A. Baker
3. Hardy of Wessex ... ... A. Weber
4. Thomas Hardy—A Critical Biography ... ... E. Hardy
5. The English Novel ... ... W. Allen
6. Thomas Hardy ... ... D. Brown
7. A Short History of the English Novel S. D. Neill